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THE  
SCRIPTURE-LOYALIST:  
CONTAINING  
A VINDICATION of OBEDIENCE  
TO THE PRESENT  
Civil BRITISH GOVERNMENT,  
In THINGS LAWFUL:

A  
DEFENCE of several Passages of Holy Scripture,  
from gross Abuse and Misrepresentation.

AND  
An ANSWER to ignorant and sophistical Cavils  
against Subjection to said Government, in its  
lawful Commands.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,  
An APPENDIX, containing ANSWERS to *One Hundred Questions*  
proposed to SECEDERS by ANDREW NEWTON, Merchant in  
DUNSE.

AND  
A POSTSCRIPT, containing *Twelve QUERIES*, proposed to the  
serious consideration of the REFORMED PRESBYTERY, and their  
followers.

SECOND EDITION,  
With CORRECTIONS and considerable ENLARGEMENTS.

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By WILLIAM FLETCHER, ✕  
Minister of the Gospel at BRIDGE-OF-TEATH.

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*Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to  
magistrates, to be ready to every good work, TIT. II. 1, 2.*

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COPIES OF THE

REPORT OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE

LAND OFFICE

FOR THE YEAR

1862

AND

THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

LAND OFFICE

FOR THE YEAR

1862



## INTRODUCTION.

*Containing some things to be carefully observed by the Reader.*

1. **I**T is not a *slavish* subjection to the despotic authority of *cruel tyrants* and *usurpers*, which is defended in the following pages. Our present civil rulers, supreme and subordinate, are so far from being usurpers, that they rule by the voluntary consent of the body politic; and they are so far from being cruel tyrants, that they are the guardians of our lives, liberties, and properties.—Some affirm, and perhaps very justly, that the British subjects are under a better civil government, than any other people in the world. And here we may observe, that there is a vast difference between the situation of the sufferers in the late persecuting period, and our present situation; yea, as great a difference, as between cruel bondage and precious liberty. The question with them about civil government was this, Whether a people, long oppressed with the encroachments of tyrants and usurpers, may disown their pretended authority; and when imposed upon to acknowledge it, may rather chuse to suffer, than to own it\*? But the question about civil government with us is this, Whether a people may disown the authority of magistrates, who have long protected, and are still continuing to protect, their lives and liberties? The scope of the following pages is to shew, that they may not.—Let it be farther observed here, that it is a most fallacious, and an absurd way of reasoning, to make the practice of the sufferers a precedent for disowning the present civil government. Because they disowned the authority of rulers, whose government was a plague to them, can it ever follow from hence, by any parity of reason, that we may reject the authority of rulers, whose government is an invaluable blessing to us? Is there no difference between the iron rod of an oppressing and murdering tyrant, and the gentle sceptre of a gracious prince? Whoever therefore are the successors of the late noble army of martyrs in Scotland, it is certain, that they who disown the present civil government cannot be such.

2. It is not an *unlimited* subjection to the present government, which I design to defend, but a subjection *in the Lord*. When obedience to the commands of princes would be a transgression of the law of Christ, they ought to be disobeyed. In all ages, the saints have been sacred recusants, when the will of their superiors on earth clashed with the will of the highest Lord. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego despised the menaces of king Nebuchadnezzar, and would not worship his god of gold, though a fiery

\* Hind Let Loose, page 273. old edition.

furnace, heated seven-fold, was before their eyes. *Be it known*, said they, *unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.* And when the Jewish council commanded the apostles, not to speak at all, nor to teach in the name of Jesus, Peter and John answered and said unto them, *Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.*

3. Nothing is said in the following pages with a design to favour the servile doctrine of *passive obedience*. When princes grasp at an absolute power to dispose of the lives and properties of their subjects, and when they become habitually cruel and tyrannical, the people who set them on their thrones ought to depose them, and put men in their place, who fear God, and hate covetousness. To teach that mankind should bear the yoke of oppression, when they have power to throw it off, that they should remain slaves, when they can procure their liberty by lawful means, is a doctrine so contrary to the natural principles of self-preservation, to scripture and common sense, that it deserves no refutation.

4. The topic defended in the following sheets is precisely this, That obedience is due to the *present civil British government*, in its *lawful commands*. The reformed Presbytery have taught in their Testimony, and its vindications, That obedience is *not due* to said government in its lawful commands; and herein they differ in their political principles from all other Presbyterians in Scotland. But if the faith of the reader, about subjection to civil rulers, stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, he will see, that the doctrine of obedience, to the present civil government in the Lord, is proven, in the following pages, beyond all reasonable contradiction; and that the doctrine of disowning said government, in its lawful commands, is directly opposite to the doctrine and practice of prophets, of apostles, and of Christ Jesus the Lord.

I defy any man to prove, either by express scripture, or by fair and necessary consequences deduced from it, That it is the duty of Christians to disown the authority of Christian magistrates, under whose government they enjoy their natural, civil, and religious privileges, and may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

I heartily wish, that grace may be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and that Christians of all denominations may embrace no principles, however specious, which cannot be supported by a *Thus saith the Lord*.

THE



# THE SCRIPTURE - LOYALIST.

## S E C T. I.

*SUBJECTION to the present British Government, in things lawful, warranted by the Precepts of the Divine Law.*

**N**O book was ever so much abused, as the volume of inspiration: Blaspheming Deists deny the divine authority of the holy oracles, and are not ashamed to call the gospel of Christ, a cunningly devised fable. The church of Rome, which God hath given up, in righteous judgment, to strong delusion, that she should believe a lie, denies the perfection of the holy scriptures, and therefore adds unto them her unwritten traditions, and the decrees of Popes and Councils. Brain-sick Quakers, and other deluded enthusiasts, dream that the light within them, without the written word, is a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Many, who profess to abhor these abuses of the divine word, practically trample on its precepts, without shame or remorse. They break the first commandment of the moral law, by loving the world more than God — The second, by a criminal neglect of, or a careless attendance on such religious worship and ordinances, as God hath appointed in his word. — The third and fourth, by profaning God's name and day. — And the fifth, by disobedience to the just and lawful authority of parents, masters, ministers, and magistrates. Every man hath a pope in his own heart, he loves domination, but hates subjection. To bridle this domineering man of sin, the supreme Lawgiver says to children, "Obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." — To servants, "Be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." — To church-members, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account." — And to the inhabitants of a kingdom or commonwealth, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme," &c.

You may see, reader, from the title of this little piece, that you are not to be directed to acts of parliament, made in favour of religion, for a solution of this question, Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not; but to a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. I am no enemy to civil securities given to religion,

but am persuaded, that a superstitious regard to these hath seduced some serious people into antisciptural notions about obedience to civil rulers. The following divine precepts, understood in their plain and obvious meaning, will reach conviction to every unprejudiced mind, that obedience, in all things lawful, is due to our present civil rulers.

I. Matth. xxii. 21. "Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things that are God's." The argument from this precept, for obedience to our present civil rulers, is plain. If it was the duty of the church and nation of the Jews to pay tribute to Cæsar, the heathen Roman emperor, a wicked idolater, surely it can never be our sin to pay tribute to Christian rulers. Judea was now become a province of the Roman empire, being conquered by force of arms; and if Christ commanded the Jews to pay tribute to their conquerors, ought not we to pay tribute to those who rule over us by our own voluntary consent? To evade the force of the argument contained in this precept, some tells us, "That Christ gave an answer, which left Cæsar's claim unresolved; that he neither expressly says it is lawful or unlawful to pay it." Testimony of the reformed Presbytery, page 149. This, not to call it worse, is a very unadvised exposition; for, if Cæsar's claim be unresolved, then God's claim must be so too. The arguments to support this modern exposition, are by no means conclusive; like the apples of Sodom, they may please the eye, but when handled, moulder into dust. The authors of this new gloss, alledge the following things in support of it.

1. That the question was *captious*. No doubt, the question asked at Christ was captious; for it was asked, as the evangelist tells us, That "they might take hold of his words," that so they might deliver him into the power and authority of the governor. But it will never follow from the base design of this question, that Christ declined to tell the truth in a matter of sin and duty. We find Christ, on another occasion, boldly sending a message to Herod, and calling him a fox; "Go tell that fox, &c." And, can we think, that, on this occasion, he was more afraid of Cæsar, than his underling? It is equal with him, who is armed with omnipotence, and whose "kingdom ruleth over all," to bridle the roaring lion, and disappoint the crafty fox.—Besides this, none of his enemies could hurt him, till his time should come. The fear of man, is often a snare to the cowardly sons of men; but it could be no snare to the Son of God. Let it never be insinuate among Christians, that the great God, our Saviour, durst not tell the truth through fear of a man that shall die, and of the son of man who shall be made as grass.

2. It is alledged, "That infinite wisdom shone forth, in giving such an answer, as declared their wisdom to be but folly, and at  
" once



“once disappointed all their malicious hopes.” It is granted, that infinite wisdom shone forth, in all that Christ did, and said, and in this answer too; but it follows not from the wisdom of this answer, that Cæsar’s claim was unresolved: nay, if it left his claim unresolved it was so far from having infinite wisdom in it, that it had neither the wisdom of the serpent, nor the innocence of the dove. Though the question asked at Christ, was intended to ensnare him in his words, yet it respected sin and duty, which was a clear call to give a decisive answer. Either it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, or unlawful: If it was lawful, then, according to the new interpretation, Christ left the Jews at liberty to withhold from Cæsar his due, or to break that precept of the divine law, which says, “Render therefore to all their dues: Tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom.” If it was unlawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, then Christ left the Jews at liberty, to live in a breach of the divine law; for, at this time, they did pay tribute to Cæsar, as their whole nation had done to their Roman emperors, for many years past. Therefore, if Christ left Cæsar’s claim unresolved, his answer was far more insnaring than the question asked at him. The question asked, was calculated to bring Christ into the punishing power of the Roman governor; the answer given, was calculated to bring the Jews into the punishing power of JEHOVAH, while it left them to act as they pleased, in a matter of sin and duty. The Jews rendered evil to Christ, by seeking to ensnare him in his words; and according to their exposition, Christ rendered evil to the Jews, by seeking to ensnare them in their works.

This exposition, therefore, must not be admitted; for it represents Christ as rendering evil for evil, a sin which he himself hath expressly forbidden. And besides this, it represents the infinitely wise Lawgiver as leaving a precept to the church, which is altogether useless; an express command, in which no sin is forbidden, and no duty enjoined. They must be eagle-eyed expositors indeed, who see wisdom, and infinite wisdom, in a precept of this sort.—Were you to tell a Deist, that when Christ says, “Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar’s,” he neither enjoins a duty, nor forbids a sin, might he not reply, That the moral sayings of the seven wise men of Greece, or the dark responses of a heathen oracle, are preferable to this precept of the Christian religion?—Alas! that Christians should give such occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. It is often seen, that other people, besides Papists, know how to make the word of God, a nose-of-wax, and even to allow it no meaning at all, when it wears an evident frown in its face to their favourite notions. “We have no authority, says one, to stretch out a word of divine revelation, or to shrivel it up.” A curse is pronounced on those, who either add to his words, or diminish from them; and surely, to alledge that they have no sense at all, is to diminish from them. Debaasing a text, is as bad as expunging it.

it. I would as soon strike out the sound as the sense, and deny the letter as deaden the spirit of any verse in the Bible.

3. To support their new sense, or rather, no sense, of this precept, they tell us, "That Cæsar was a proud, aspiring, idolatrous, and bloody usurper, having no other right to the most part of his dominions, then the Lord's providential disposal, which sometimes makes the tabernacles of robbers to prosper;—into whose hands, God bringeth abundantly." Suppose this Cæsar to be an usurper (which some have denied) as well as a proud, idolatrous, and bloody man; it follows not from hence, that Christ commanded not the Jews to pay tribute to him. Nebuchadnezzar, the famed king of Babylon, possessed his dominions, by the Lord's providential disposal, as well as Cæsar; he was an idolater as well as Cæsar, and nothing behind him in pride: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my Majesty?" And as to cruelty, none could exceed him, "He slew their young men with the sword, in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man, nor maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age," 2 Coron. xxxvi. 17.—Now, God expressly commanded Israel, to be subject to this wicked monster. "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live," Jer. xxvii. 12. In opposition to this command, many of them went into Egypt, and died there, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, Jeremiah xlii. 17. — The wickedness of Cæsar then, doth by no means prove, that Christ did not command the Jews to give tribute unto him. The Lord's providential disposal, made the tabernacles of Nebuchadnezzar the robber, to prosper, as well as the tabernacles of Cæsar the robber. He who, for their sins, gave Israel to Nebuchadnezzar the robber, gave the same rebellious people to Cæsar the robber. And why should not the people of God be subject to robbers, in all things lawful, at God's bidding? He who said, "Serve the king of Babylon," said also, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." And when God, as a just punishment of their sins, makes strangers to rule over them, ought they not to say, "We will bear the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him?"

4. To support their new gloss, we are told, "That the Jews could not consent to Cæsar's authority, but in express contradiction to many plain and positive scripture precepts, enjoining them to chuse one of their own nation and religion to be their king." This is a most unguarded assertion; for, if it is true, it is true also, that God commanded Israel expressly to contradict his own law, when he commanded them to bring their necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon. God gave Israel precepts enjoining them to set one of their brethren over them; and, as far as I know,



know, they observed those precepts exactly in the letter of them. They would have contradicted these precepts, if they had chosen one of another nation and religion to be their king; but it was no contradiction to these precepts, to obey heathen kings, in all things lawful, when, as a just punishment of their sins, they became a conquered nation, and it was not in their power to have a king of their own nation and religion.

5. We are told, "That it is *violence* done to the text, (as also "opposite to the sentiments of some eminent divines on the place) "to say, that it contains a *command* to pay tribute to Cæsar."—To say, that this text leaves Cæsar's claim unresolved, that Christ neither says it is lawful or unlawful to pay tribute to him, is to deprive the text of sense altogether, which is far greater violence done it, than to say, that it contains a command to pay tribute to Cæsar. And, the reformed presbyters excepted, we know no eminent divines, nor commentators, who deny, that this text contains a command to pay tribute to Cæsar; or, in other words, who strip it of any meaning, and so reckon it a mere cypher in the volume of inspiration.

6. We are told, "That the Jews did not understand this text, "as a command to pay tribute to Cæsar, as would appear from "Luke xxiii. 2. *We found this fellow perverting the nation, and "forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar.*" We formerly heard of some eminent divines; here we have eminent divines with a witness, doctors of Satan's dubbing! Are the false witnesses, the accusers, the perverters of the words of the Lord of glory, also among the prophets! Be it so, that these wretches did not understand this text, as a command to pay tribute to Cæsar, it will not follow, that it was not a command. If they had any respect to this text, when they accused Christ, they understood it as a prohibition; and their commentary on it, is plainly this, that Christ forbade to give tribute to Cæsar, when he said, *Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's.* Will the reformed presbytery subscribe this commentary? Will they say, that the malicious Jews spake the truth, when they said, *We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar.* If they will not, then let them extrude the accusers of Christ, from the number of their orthodox commentators.

7. We are told, "That this is not the only instance, where "our Lord, in infinite wisdom, declined to give direct answers to "the ensnaring questions of his malicious enemies. John viii. 37—12. "Matth. xxi. 23,—28. John xviii. 19, 20, 21." Testimony, page 150. To this it might be sufficient to reply, That whatever answers Christ gave to the ensnaring questions of his enemies, he never gave an ensnaring answer, an answer which left them to the freedom of their own will, in a matter of sin and duty, and such an answer was that to the question about tribute, in the reformed sense of

of it. But, granting that our Lord sometimes did decline, to give direct answers to the ensnaring questions of his enemies, it will never follow from hence, by any just rules of reasoning, that he declined to answer the captious question about tribute. Nay, we find him giving a most plain and determinate answer to as captious a question, as that about tribute could be, When Pilate asked him, *Art thou the king of the Jews?* — *Jesus answering, said unto him, Thou sayest it,* Mark xv. 2. And when the Scribes and Pharisees asked him, *Art thou then the Son of God?* — *And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.* And they said, *What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.* Therefore we take our Lord's answer to the question about tribute, for a plain and positive answer, and affirm, That this is not the only instance, where he, in infinite wisdom, gave direct answers to the ensnaring questions of his malicious enemies.

As to the instances alledged, for supporting the indeterminate sense of the answer to the question about tribute; it is evident, that in these instances, our Lord gave no dubious answers to the ensnaring questions of his enemies, in matters of sin and duty, and therefore will never prove, that he gave a dubious answer to the question about tribute. When the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him the woman taken in adultery, and said unto him, *Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?* He did not say, You may keep, or break the law of Moses, in this matter, as you please. He did not condemn the woman taken in adultery, because this was not his business, his kingdom not being of this world. But, as the great Minister of the New Testament, he convinced his adversaries of sin; but gave them no dubious, no ensnaring answers, in matters of sin and duty. And there is as little in the other two instances, as in this, to support the doubtful sense of the answer to the question about tribute. — When the chief priests and elders asked Christ, *By what authority dost thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?* And when they would not answer the question, which Christ asked them about the baptism of John, he answered, not doubtfully, but plainly; *Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.* He gave no answer to their question at all; and therefore did not give an indeterminate one. Nor did Christ, by refusing to answer their question, leave them in the dark about his authority, his divine Sonship and mission; for he had plainly told them, on other occasions, that he was the Son of God, and Saviour of the world. John vi. 27. *Labour for that meat which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed.* Ver. 51. *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.* John x. 36. *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest? because I said, I am the Son of God.* And though the answers, which



which Christ gave to the captious questions of the high priest, were not direct, yet there is nothing indeterminate or dubious in them.

When the high priest asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine, Jesus answered him, *I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whether the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing, why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said.* Now, tho' these are not direct, yet they are plain answers. There is nothing dark, or doubtful, or indeterminate in them, no matter of sin or duty left unresolved; and therefore can never prove, that Christ neither enjoined a duty, nor forbade a sin, when he said, *Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.*

But after all the pains the Reformed Presbytery have been at, to prove that this text hath no meaning, That Christ neither expressly says it is lawful or unlawful to pay tribute to Cæsar; that it contains no command to pay tribute to Cæsar, they themselves have given it a very odd sense. P. 150. of their testimony they say, "So, that by looking unto the divine law, which determines every one's due, according to their just character, and of which they [the Jews] could not be ignorant, they might see, that he [Cæsar] had a just title to all that was due to an usurper, idolater, and murderer." They deny that this text contains a command to pay tribute to Cæsar, here they grant, that it contains a command or at least an allowance to kill Cæsar. According to them the sense of this text is, *Render therefore unto Cæsar a halter and a gallows; which is a forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar with a witness.* Did the reformed Presbytery know, that they had born false witness against Christ, when this false interpretation dropt from their pen? Did they know, that they had been treading in the same path with the accusers of the Lord of glory? If the reformed sense of this text is true, the sense which the accusers of Christ put upon it, is true also, *We found this fellow, said the accusers of Christ, perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar.* And we found him, says the reformed Presbytery, or at least insinuating, that its lawful to kill Cæsar. This last commentary is a virtual approbation of the first; or that the Jews spake true, when they said, that Christ forbade to give tribute to Cæsar; for if he taught that it was lawful to kill Cæsar, he forbade to give tribute to him with a witness. Alas! that Christian commentators should be found among the false witnesses, who rose up against Christ; and laid to his charge things that he knew not.

II. We have a clear warrant for subjection to the present civil government, in all things lawful, in Rom. xiii. 1. *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers: for there is no power but of God, &c.* Sir, said the servants of the householder, *didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? The*

householder said unto them, *An enemy hath done this.* When the apostles of Christ sowed the good seed of the word in the famous metropolis of the Roman empire, Satan sowed the tares of disloyalty to civil rulers, which sprung up almost as early, as the precious seed. Therefore, the design of the apostle, as all commentators have observed, in this and the six following verses, is to curb an evil spirit of rebellion, which was lifting up its head in a church, whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. Commentators have observed also, that the apostle here is exhorting the Christians at Rome, to be subject to the Roman Emperor, and other inferior rulers. Now, if the Holy Ghost commanded the Christians at Rome, whether Jews or Gentiles, to be subject to the heathen magistrates, and that under the pain of damnation, ought not we to be subject to magistrates who are professed, and no doubt many of them true Christians? This is so plain, that one would think a man in his right wits would not deny it. This precept, is none of Paul's sayings, in which are some things hard to be understood, but it is a plain precept, as all precepts generally are. The meaning of it is so plain, that he who runs may read it. But plain as this precept is, a late expositor hath rendered it truly mysterious, by giving it a new, and strange gloss. He positively denies, that the apostle is here exhorting the Christians at Rome to be subject to the heathen Emperor, and governors under him. He tells us, "That when the apostle says, *There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God*: he certainly means, either the office of magistracy in all its different branches in the abstract, or else the office filled with virtuous rulers only \*."

This Exposition is the fruit, either of the strongest prejudice, or of the most wilful ignorance. Some think, it's as easy to swallow, and digest a camel, or to drink in the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation, as to believe the truth of said exposition. Nay, it is not credible, how Mr M'Millan, or any other man in his right mind, can believe it to be true. The first sense represents the apostle as speaking perfect jargon and nonsense. That the apostle is here exhorting to an act of obedience cannot be disputed; for, he expressly says, *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.* Now, if by *the power*, and the *powers that be*, are meant magistracy in the abstract, then the apostle must be enjoining an act of subjection on the Romans neither towards God nor man, but towards magistracy in the abstract. And so the apostle's exhortation here, and the motives to enforce it, might be paraphrased thus, Let every one of you christians, in the church of Rome, be subject to magistracy in the abstract; for magistracy in the abstract is ordained of God. Magistracy in the abstract is not a terror to the good works, but to the evil. Magistracy in the abstract is the minister of God, and beareth not the sword in vain. Magistracy in the abstract is a

re-

\* See Mr. M'Millan's letter to Messrs. Belfrage, &c. p. 38, 39.



revenger. Therefore pay tribute, render dues, custom, fear, honour, to the office of magistracy in all its different branches in the abstract.

As this sense is absurd in the highest degree, and a manifest disgrace to a master in Israel; so the other sense is utterly false, viz. That the apostle means the office of magistracy filled with virtuous rulers, for there were no such rulers in Paul's day, nor for three hundred years after it. That the apostle means the then heathen rulers, is unquestionably evident from his own words, *The powers that be*. Had he meant virtuous rulers, he would certainly have said, the powers that will be three hundred years hence. If Paul is not here exhorting the christians at Rome to be subject to the civil powers which then were, his exhortation, and motives to enforce it, could be of as little use to them, and to the churches of Christ for hundreds of years after them, as threshing the water, or beating the air. No man can tell for what end the apostle says to the church of Rome, *Let every soul of you be subject to the higher powers*, if it was not to direct them, how to behave towards the civil rulers, which then were. These words, *The powers that be*, are to the reformed Presbytery as a serpent by the way, an adder in the path; that biteth the horses heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. Being conscious, that this serpent will bite without enchantment, they have carefully avoided to rouse it up. Mr. M'Millan junr. hath indeed awakened this adder in the path; and as Saul of Tarsus dealt with the saints, hath compelled it to blaspheme, or to speak words, which are a reproach to the wisdom of the Spirit of inspiration. To say, that *by the the powers that be* is meant magistracy in the abstract, is to make the Holy Ghost assert absurdity. To say that virtuous rulers are meant, is to make the Spirit of God maintain, that the then rulers were virtuous, which is a notorious falsehood. To hear the mother of harlots, and her deluded followers, who are drunk with the wine of her fornication, torturing the Scriptures, and compelling them to support their doctrines of devils, is no wonder at all, *Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved: And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie*. But to find the highest pretenders among presbyterians to orthodoxy and reformation, evidently perverting one of the plainest passages in the book of God, is not only matter of wonder, but likewise of lamentations, of mourning, and wo. "Hard lot, says one, of the scriptures of truth! And "presumptuous boldness in man! to prostitute the sacred oracles "of the eternal God, to support every whim they take it into "their heads, to propagate."

III. We have a warrant for subjection to the present civil government, in all things lawful, in Paul's first epistle to Timothy, chap. ii. 1, 2. Here he exhorts to *pray for kings, and for all that*

are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. By kings, and all that are in authority here, can be meant no other civil rulers but the *heathen Roman Emperors*, and their *deputies*; for none but these were in Paul's day, as we have already seen. Praying for magistrates is an act of *subjection* to them; and if it was the duty of christians in the apostolic age, to pray for *pagan princes*, it is evident, beyond all reasonable contradiction, that it is our duty to pray for one of the *best protestant princes in the world*. But we find the obvious meaning of this passage turned out of doors, by a member of the Reformed Presbytery, and a very odd sense put in its room. Mr Thorburn, in his *Vindiciæ Magistratus*, P. 205. tells us, "That when Paul exhorts to pray for kings, and for all that are in authority, he enjoined and recommended to pray for, and wish well to God's ordinance, or lawful authority." This comment is exactly of a piece with Mr. M'Millan's gloss on the powers that be, by which, says he, the apostle certainly means *magistracy in the abstract*. He had a shadow of reason for this gloss, absurd as it is; for Paul uses the *abstract* for the *concrete*, or the word *powers* for *persons* in power. But Mr. Thorburn has not the smallest shadow of reason for his comment; for the apostle exhorts, that prayers be made for *persons*, viz. for *kings*, and for *all that are in authority*, and not for God's ordinance, or lawful authority, as he says.

It is plain, that Mr Thorburn uses these words, *God's ordinance, lawful authority*, in an abstract view; or, as having no respect to civil rulers in Paul's day. And so the meaning of the apostle, according to him, is, That the Christians in Paul's day should pray for God's ordinance of magistracy in the *abstract*, and for lawful authority in the *abstract*. Is there not reason to say here, *The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad*? Strange! Has the ordinance of magistracy in the abstract, any need of supplication and prayers? Can magistracy in the abstract be a mean of living a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty?—Paul exhorts to pray for all that are in authority: but how absurd would it be to say, the ordinance of magistracy in the abstract, is in authority, or that lawful authority is in authority?—Is not a commentary of this sort adapted to confirm Deists in their belief, that the Old and New Testament is a volume of nonsense; or a cunningly devised fable?

The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; and the passage before us must not be excluded from being a part of our direction. Now, if Mr Thorburn and his brethren believe his gloss, on this passage, to be the mind of the Holy Ghost in it, they ought to pray in publick, in the words of the apostle, for kings and all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. And if their people be offended at them, for using the words of the Holy Ghost in prayer, they  
may



may inform them, once for all, That by *kings*, and *all that are in authority*, they do not mean king GEORGE the Third, nor governors that are sent by him, but they are praying for, and wishing well to the *ordinance* of magistracy. If Mr. Thorburn's comment is just, that by kings the apostle means magistracy in the abstract, then by *all men* in the preceding clause, he must not mean men, but *manhood* or *human nature* in the abstract. And the primitive Christians were not directed to pray and give thanks for their fellow-men, but for human nature in the abstract. An odd sort of thanksgiving! Whether can he mean thanksgiving for human nature in primeval innocence, under reigning depravity, regenerated or glorified? Besides, how could such a prayer, as Mr. Thorburn mentions, have promoted their *peace*? They were certainly to pray in such a manner as that these who heard them might understand them; that they did not pray for the then present rulers, otherwise they were but deceitful jugglers. And can Mr. Thorburn, or any man living, tell how a prayer for magistracy in the abstract could promote their peace, when they could not pray for the then rulers? Both Mr M'Millan, and Mr Thorburn make the apostle to deliver a truly ensnaring precept to the primitive Christians. When the apostle enjoins them to be subject to *the higher powers*;—and to *render to every one their due*, could ever these Christians imagine, that by *every one* the apostle meant *magistracy in the abstract*? As little could they imagine, that he meant rulers who should live three hundred years after.—And when the apostle exhorts them to pray for *all men*, for *kings* and *all in authority*, could they ever imagine, that by *all men*, he meant all their *fellow men*; but by *kings*, and *these in authority*, authority *itself*, while he gives them not the remotest hint of it? To give them such plain and explicit directions, and never once in all his epistles gives them the least hint, that they were not to pay tribute unto, nor to pray for the civil rulers; if this is not to make the apostle, or rather the Spirit of God, lay a trap for, and give a most ensnaring precept to these Christians, I know not what can be so. I know not how men can venture to publish such nonsense. They certainly know, that the unprejudiced will see their absurdities; and that their bigotted followers will swallow any thing. If any man can swallow the sense, which the reformed Presbytery hath given of the 13th of the Romans, and other similar texts, he will never strain at a gnat, for he is able to swallow a camel.

## S E C T. II.

*SUBJECTION to the present British Government, in things lawful, warranted by SCRIPTURE EXAMPLES.*

**T**HAT the church of Christ, in all ages and places of the world, wherever God appointed the bounds of her habitation, was subject to the *higher powers*, and not only to the *good and gentle*; but also to the *froward*, is a truth so plainly revealed in the Volume of God's Book, that he who runs may read it.—The kings of Egypt were gross idolaters, worshippers of bulls, rivers, onions, &c. and yet the church of God was subject to them for several generations. *Know of a surety*, said the Lord unto Abram, *that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years*, Gen. xv. 13. Pious Joseph was a subject; yea, a prime minister to Pharaoh, and yet was blameless; for the Sovereign, who rules on high, made him *lord of Pharaoh's house*, and *ruler over all his substance*; *To bind his princes at his pleasure*; and *to teach his senators wisdom*, Psa. cv. 21, 22. — Jacob, the beloved of the Lord, went down to Egypt with all his seed, well knowing that he and they were to be the subjects of heathen rulers: and yet he was blameless; for the Lord said unto him, *Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation*. This noble Patriarch, this prince, who had power with God, and prevailed, was so far from despising dominion, and speaking evil of dignities, that he blessed a pagan prince.

After the reign of the judges, Israel had kings of their own nation and religion, and they were subject to the lawful authority of the very worst of them. More of the kings of Judah wanted a competent measure of scripture qualifications than had them; and not one of the kings of Israel had any measure of these qualifications at all.—Jeroboam the son of Nebat, their first king, was a sinner before the Lord exceedingly; and all his successors walked in his steps; every one of them did *evil in the sight of Lord*. But were ever either Israel or Judah reproved for obeying such princes in things lawful? No, indeed: God frequently sent his prophets to reprove them for their own idolatry, and other abominations, but never with a commission to cast off the lawful authority of an apostatizing Solomon, an idolatrous Jeroboam, and a devilish Manasseh.—The prophets, as well as the people of Israel and Judah, were subject to the worst of their kings. Elijah girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab, to the entrance of Jezreel, 1 Kings xviii. 4, 6. The hand of the Lord was on Elijah, when he performed this act of subjection to one of the worst of princes. And we dare not pre-  
sume



sume to say, that the same hand was not on the prophet Jeremiah, when he said to a perfidious Zedekiah, *O my lord the king; Let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee, that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there.*

Almost six hundred years revolved from the carrying away into Bayblon unto Christ; and during that long period, the Jews had no king of their own nation and religion, but were subject to heathen princes, such as Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, kings of Bayblon; and Cyrus and Darius, kings of the Medes and Persians. It is well known what reputation Daniel and his fellows were in at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and the first Persian kings, and that other Jews under the succeeding ones held the highest posts in the government.—Ezra, who was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, was sent by Artaxerxes king of Persia, with a royal commission to rectify the church and state of the Jews.—Nehemiah, who was the royal cup-bearer in the Persian court, was empowered by the same prince, to go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.—Mordecai the Jew, and prime minister to Ahasuerus, another Persian king, Esther v. 2, 3. — And the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the books of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus. It is true, indeed, that the Jews after their return from the captivity, were governed by their own laws, and practised their own religion, under the administration of the high priest, assisted by the Sanhedrum; yet they still remained subject to the dominion of the Persians, as long as that empire lasted. And tho' it be true also, that the Jews cast off the authority of Antiochus Epiphanius, king of Syria, and maintained their independence, by force of arms, above a hundred years, under the conduct of Judas Macabæus, and others, yet this revolt was no act of disobedience to the lawful commands of that prince, but a just defence of their holy religion, and precious lives. This Antiochus was a cruel persecutor of the Jews. In three days time he slew forty thousand Jews, and sold as many for slaves to the neighbouring nations. He commanded the Jews to renounce the worship of the true God, and to conform to all the rites of the Grecian idolatry, upon pain of death.

When the great Teacher, sent from God, came into the world, he found the church of the Jews subject to the heathen Roman emperors; and was so far from disapproving their subjection, that he commanded them to pay tribute to Cæsar.

More than 300 years elapsed between the death of Christ, and the reign of Constantine the Great, the first Christian Emperor; and during that period, the New Testament church was subject to the heathen Roman emperors, and their subjection was warranted by the law of Christ; *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers,*  
Rom.

Rom. xiii. 1. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, &c.* 1 Pet. ii. 13. History gives no account, that for the space of 300 years, they were chargeable with a single act of disobedience to these precepts, either refusing obedience in things lawful, or disseminating seditious principles among their connexions.

Surely these examples of the old and new testament church, are recorded to direct us, how to behave towards the powers that be, when God, in his adorable providence, gives strangers to rule over us: for, what was written *aforetime*, was written for our learning, on whom the ends of the world are come.

The approved examples of the saints in scripture, and such are all those above-mentioned, are as much the rule of our duty, as the precepts of the moral law. *Be followers of them*, saith the apostle, *who through faith and patience inherit the promises*. If it was lawful for the church, in all past generations, to obey the just authority of the most froward kings and emperors, when God appointed the bounds of her habitation in their dominions, surely it must be lawful for us, to obey the just authority of a king, who is meek and gentle, a lover of his subjects, and the guardian of their laws and liberties.

The following conclusions are evident from the preceding sections.

1. That the reformed Presbytery are not *sound in the faith*.— Their senseless exposition of Rom. xiii. 1. and other plain precepts of a similar nature, is a manifest token, that they have departed from the faith delivered unto the saints, in these precepts, and are following *cunningly devised fables*. The most, if not the whole, of the precepts of the divine law, are so plain, that their meaning is obvious to Christians of the weakest abilities, to little children and babes, as well as to young men and fathers. Had the reformed Presbytery mistaken the meaning of some dark sayings in the writings of the prophets and apostles, or the import of some prediction, wrapt up in metaphorical language, charity, which *thinketh no evil*, would draw a veil over such a mistake; but when they pervert the plain sense of the words of the Holy Ghost, they are justly to be blamed as unsound in the faith.

2. That the reformed Presbytery are not going forth by the *approved footsteps of the flock of Christ*, in all past generations. The old and new-testament church, as we have seen, were subject, for ages and generations, to far worse princes than any of the Hanoverian line, and yet were blameless. The said Presbytery are not walking in the footsteps of the inspired prophets, and holy apostles of the Lamb. Daniel, a man greatly beloved, and a notable prophet, said to a far worse prince than the British monarch, *O king live for ever*. Paul, who was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles, said to a far worse prince than his present majesty  
King



King George, *I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee.* And to another heathen ruler he said, *I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.*—Were these chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof, now living, and hearing a reformed Presbyter expressing his sentiments about civil government, would they not say unto him? *Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.* Here let me ask a reformed Presbyter, *Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?* Nay, the reformed Presbytery are not walking in the steps of the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Christ is called a *servant of rulers*, Isa. xlix. 7. which designation certainly imports his subjection to the Roman heathen rulers, in the days of his humiliation; for then there were no other civil rulers in the land of Judea. That adorable person, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice, manifested himself to be a servant of rulers, by paying tribute to Cæsar a heathen prince. When the tax-gatherers at Capernaum asked Peter, *Doth not your master pay tribute?* “Peter, (says Bishop Hall,) as one well acquainted with the mind and practice of his master, answered *Yes*. There was no truer pay-master of the king’s dues than he that was King of kings. Well did Peter know, that he did not only give, but preach tribute. When the Herodians laid twigs for him, as supposing that so great a prophet would be all for the liberty and exemption of God’s chosen people, he choaks them with their own coin, and told them the stamp argued the right; *Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s.*” The tribute which Christ paid was not, as some think, for the service of the temple, but a civil tribute, paid to the Roman civil rulers; and therefore Christ calls them *kings* \*. *Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom, or tribute?* Are the reformed Presbytery then walking in the steps of the great Teacher come from God? No indeed: their refusing obedience to the present civil government, in things lawful, is a direct contradiction to the supreme authority and unblemished practice

\* The cause of the Reformed Presbytery is not helped in the least, by supposing, that the tribute, which Christ paid at Capernaum, was for the service of the Sanctuary. If it was sinful to pay tribute, for supporting a Pagan civil government, it was no less so, to pay it, for supporting a church, that was wallowing in the mire of error, and immorality. The body of the Jewish church was at this time an evil, and adulterous generation, a generation of vipers. The whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint.—Their teachers made the commandments of God of none effect by their traditions.—They taught for doctrines, the commandments of men.—They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: they neither went in themselves, neither suffered they them that were entering, to go in.—They devoured widows houses.—They compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he was made, they made him two-fold more the child of hell than themselves.

practice of the Son of God. So the disciple becomes wiser than his divine Master, and the servant than his highest Lord !

3. That the reformed Presbytery do not reduce their own principles to practice. In words, they refuse all subjection to the present government; in deeds, they are truly loyal; for, in their several stations they support government as much, by paying tribute, as the most loyal subjects in the nation. The reformed Presbytery are so sensible of this, that in their Testimony, p. 199, they do not testify against paying tribute for the support of government, but against a *direct* and *active*, a *free* and *voluntary* paying of it. The loyal subjects of the nation are here supposed to be sinners, because they pay tribute in a direct and active, in a free and voluntary way; and the reformed Presbytery, and their followers, are supposed innocent, because they pay tribute, in an indiscreet and inactive, in an unfree and involuntary way. This distinction between a voluntary and involuntary way of paying tribute, is a most ensnaring one; or to use the words of the reformed Presbytery, it is a *mere skift* and *artifice*, and serves for no other purpose, but to cheat their own, and others consciences \*. If this distinction hath a foundation in the volume of God's book, no man can be under any necessity to suffer persecution for conscience sake; for, by an indirect payment of tribute to the worst of princes, and for the worst of purposes, and by an involuntary obedience to their most impious commands, we may preserve a good conscience, and escape the rage of the enemy and avenger.

If this distinction be just, Protestants in Popish countries may have a lawful and an easy way to escape banishment, imprisonment, or a cruel death: an involuntary subjection to the idolatrous worship of the Romish Harlot, and involuntary prayers to angels and the blessed Virgin, will preserve them in the peaceable possession of their lives and liberties. According to this modern rule of Christian conversation. Daniel might have escaped the den of lions, by an involuntary restraining of prayer before God for thirty days. The three children might have escaped the fiery furnace, by an involuntary prostration before Nebuchadnezzar's golden image. Our noble army of martyrs, in the late persecuting period in Scotland, might have saved their lives, and preserved a good conscience too, by an involuntary prayer for the king, as head of all causes, civil and ecclesiastic. Disloyalty to the present civil government, is, with the reformed Presbytery, a great branch of reformation; but their involuntary way of paying tribute is a deadly in this box of precious ointment, for it allows them to be loyal be-

\* If the paying tribute to the present civil government, be a sin, the best apology, which a Reformed Presbyterian can make for paying it, may be expressed in the words of the Syrian general to the prophet Elisha:—"When I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." 2 Kings v. 18.



beyond all bounds of reason and religion. Were the present government to demand a taxation for the hellish purpose of rooting out the Christian religion in Great Britain, the Reformed Presbytery could easily shelter themselves from sin, under the wings of an indirect and involuntary payment of it, which is nothing else but an indirect, and involuntary way of sinning. To pay tribute to the present government must be either a sin, or a duty: if a sin, it ought not to be done, neither in a voluntary, nor involuntary way: if a duty, it ought to be performed with the whole heart, for the law of God requires no such thing as an indirect, and involuntary performance of any duty. But absurd and ensnaring as this involuntary way of paying tribute is, Mr. Thorburn, in his *Vindicia Magistratus*, page 213. pretends to support it from Rom. vii. 19, 20. *For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* If these words are indeed a just foundation, for an involuntary way of paying tribute, a true Christian may steal, commit adultery, swear falsely, and then tell the world, that he is blameless; that it is no more he that doth it, but sin that dwelleth in him. And that the evil which he would not, that he did. Alas! that a teacher in Israel should so grossly pervert the words of the holy One. But if the present civil rulers are so bad, in the judgment of the Reformed Presbytery, that it is a sin to pray for them, surely it must be a sin also to support them by paying tribute, either directly or indirectly, in a voluntary or involuntary way. Therefore, when they insinuate, that they pay tribute in an indirect, and involuntary way, they just tell the world, that they are indirect and involuntary transgressors. Certain it is, that this indirect, and involuntary way of sinning, will meet with as little of divine approbation, as a direct, and a voluntary way of sinning. If the Reformed Presbytery, and their followers, acted according to their principles, they would pay no tribute at all, neither directly nor indirectly; but would let a great person whom they call the *robber of Christ*, take it from them by force.

Our worthy ancestors, in the late persecuting period in Scotland, were not so well acquainted with the science of metaphysics, as their successors. They knew nothing of paying tribute in an indirect, and involuntary way to a prince, who was indeed a robber of Christ. They did not spoil themselves of their goods with their own hands, nor with hands borrowed from their good neighbours, but they were spoiled of their goods by the hands of the robber himself, when taxes were demanded to support an army for suppressing the gospel. *They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and a more enduring substance.* The Presbyterian Covenanter justly calls the distinction between a voluntary and involuntary payment of tribute, a *jesuitical distinction*; and here I call it a *diabolical*, yea, a

*blasphemous distinction*; and an attempt to support it by scripture is no less so.

In the text used to support it, the apostle certainly means, that it was remaining depravity which did that which he would not, and therefore Mr. Thorburn must mean, that it is indwelling sin which makes the involuntary payment of tribute. But the fatal difference is, the apostle disapproves of it in the strongest manner: but Mr. Thorburn approves, or at least excuses. Unless he means, that the apostle approves, or excuses, it is nothing to his purpose; and how impious the insinuation!

4. That the reformed Presbytery are not going forth by the *footsteps of the flock of Christ* in Scotland in *reforming times*.— They would have the world believe, that they are the genuine successors of our famous reformers; but no man, who knows the history of the Reformation, can believe them to be so. From the dawn of the Reformation from Popery to the Revolution, our worthy ancestors were subject to the powers which then were, in all things lawful. They were subject to Queen Mary, a bigotted Papist, and a bloody persecutor, till the body politic deposed her from the government. They were subject to King James the Sixth, who proved a covenant-breaker, and by secret fraud and open violence, endeavoured to impose Episcopacy upon them. They were subject to King Charles the first, who succeeded his father in the kingdom, and in all his evils, and particular in overturning, and new-modelling, the discipline and government of the church of Scotland. They owned his civil authority in the strongest terms, even when he was endeavouring to obtrude the Service-book upon them by force of arms. They were subject to King Charles the Second, whose little finger was thicker than his father's loins, and continued their subjection, till he became a merciless tyrant, and required it as a test of their loyalty, to own his supremacy in the church, as well as in the state: and when a demand of this kind was made, it was their duty to obey God rather than man. Were the reformed Presbytery, and their followers, the true successors of the ancient Presbyterians in Scotland, they would be subject to King George the third in all things lawful, and continue their subjection, till the gentle sceptre, which he now sways over his subjects, were exchanged for a rod of iron; or till he demanded of them, as a test of their loyalty, an acknowledgment of his supremacy in the church, as well as in the state.\*

5. That the Reformed Presbytery are not *rendering to God*, according to the *benefit* done unto them. Is it not an inestimable blessing, that the present government doth not disturb us in the exercise of  
our

\* Charles had been heading and hanging a considerable time before they rejected his authority; and there is no reason to think that they would have rejected it, if he had not enforced the supremacy with death, but allowed them to live, as English dissenters do at present.



our holy religion, nor cause us to seek the food of our souls at the peril of our lives? And is not this blessing from a gracious God, who hath the heart of the king in his hand, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whether-soever he will? Is it not matter of thankfulness to the Father of mercies, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty under our civil rulers? Why then are not supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, made for all men, by the Reformed Presbytery? *For kings, and for all that are in authority?* Ezra was as sensible, and as zealous a reformer, as any Presbyterian in Scotland can pretend to be, and we find him expressing the warmest gratitude to God, for the privileges, which the church of Israel enjoyed under the heathen kings of Persia. Ezra vii. 27. *Blessed be the God of our fathers, who hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.* Chap. ix. 9. *Our God hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.* The practice of this inspired reformer is worthy of imitation, even by a Reformed Presbytery. The example of this champion for the house of his God is recorded for our learning, upon whom the ends of the world are come. The peaceable possession of our civil, and religious privileges under the present government is of God. *Praise thy God, O Zion, for he maketh peace in thy borders.* Therefore if any man despise this blessing, he is reproved, or rather upbraided by an inspired apostle, Rom. ii. 4. *Despiseest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

### S E C T. III.

*Containing ANSWERS to some OBJECTIONS.*

*Obj. I.* “**T**HE law of God requires Christians to choose a king of their own religion. Deut. xvii. 15. *One from among thy brethren shall thou set king over thee.* But the king of Great Britain is not a brother, or one of our religion; and therefore subjection to him is sinful.”

*Ans.* The question here is not, whether we should choose a king of our own religion or not; but whether it is our duty to obey the present king in things lawful, or not. It is the duty of Christians to choose a king of their own religion; and to do otherwise is very sinful: but it is no sin to obey a king of a different religion in things lawful, when it is not in their power to choose a king of their own religion, as was the case with the primitive  
Chris.

Christians, during the first three centuries; and the same is the case with all Christians in Popish and Pagan countries at this day. The rule to direct Christians how to *choose* a king, and the rule to direct them how to *behave* towards one chosen by others, are very different. When they have the choice of a king, the command of God is, *One from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee.* But when God appoints the bounds of their habitation in countries, where they cannot have a king of their own religion, like Israel in the land of the Chaldeans, or the first Christians in the heathen Roman empire, then the divine command is, *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; the powers that be, are ordained of God,* Rom. xiii. 1. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, &c.* 1 Pet. ii. 13.—But besides all this, it is not true, that the present British King is not a *brother*, or not of *our* religion. He is a *Protestant* by profession; and his being so is an essential condition of government. He is a *Christian* by profession; and *charity*, which *thinketh no evil*, without sufficient evidence, will account him a Christian indeed. It is true, he is a professed member of the Episcopal church of England, which is a grievance to other Presbyterians in Scotland, as well as to these called *reformed*; but his being a member of said church doth not make him a king of a different religion from Presbyterians, nor destroy his brotherhood to them as a Protestant, and professed Christian.

*Object. 2.* “ We find the people of God in scripture refusing  
“ subjection to usurpers, idolaters, and murderers. The loyal  
“ subjects of King David would not submit to the usurped authority  
“ of Absalom. King Aza degraded his mother Maacha from her  
“ royal station, because of her idolatry. Jezebel, the wife of Ahab,  
“ and Athaliah, the wife of Jehoram, were slain, because they  
“ were idolaters and murderers.”

*Ans.* If a thousand scripture examples like these could be adduced, they could militate nothing at all against subjection to the present civil government, in matters lawful: There would be strength in the objection, if King George the Third were an usurper, an idolater, and a murderer. But if any man should affirm, that the present British Monarch is an Absalom for usurpation, and a son of Jezebel for idolatry and murder, I would say of that man, he is more fit for bedlam, than to be reasoned with.

*Object. 3.* “ The true Presbyterian Covenanters in Scotland  
“ never did, neither at, nor since the Revolution, acknowledge  
“ the present civil government as lawful.”

*Ans.* If we may believe history, it is not fact, that the true Presbyterian Covenanters in Scotland did not acknowledge the civil government as lawful, at the Revolution. The author of the *Memoirs of the Church of Scotland* says, page 301. “ To the  
“ eternal honour of the wild, antimonarchial, enthusiastic, lunatic,  
“ Came-



“Cameronians, (as they were then called), these Presbyterians were the first men in Scotland that addressed, or petitioned the Convention of Estates, to place the crown of Scotland on the head of their deliverer King WILLIAM.” But if the objection were never so true, it contains no argument at all against the lawfulness of the present civil government, for, if no government must be acknowledged as lawful, till every male-content be pleased with it, no such thing will be found in the world as a lawful government. Must obedience to government in things lawful be suspended, till every blind, and self-willed zealot acknowledge it as lawful? or, must a handful of dissenters have a negative over a whole nation, in the erection of civil government?

*Object.* 4. “To obey the present civil government in things lawful, is an approbation of all the evils in the constitution.”

*Ans.* The following things impartially considered, will expose the weakness and absurdity of this objection. (1.) That there are many evils in the constitution is confessed; but that obedience in things lawful is an approbation of these evils, is denied, till it be proven by the law and testimony of Jesus Christ. Pray, what necessary connexion is there between obedience in things lawful, and an approbation of all, or any of the evils in the constitution? Any man may see, without the assistance of metaphysics, that these things are as different as light and darkness. Would an inspired prophet have exhorted Israel, to serve the heathen king of Babylon, if their service had been an approbation of the evils of his constitution? Would an inspired apostle have exhorted the primitive Christians, to be subject to the heathen Roman emperors, if their subjection had been an approbation of the evils in their constitution? Did the law of God allow the saints of old, to make a distinction between obedience in things lawful, and an approbation of the faults of a constitution, and doth it now forbid them to make any such distinction? (2.) This objection plainly supposes, that no subjection is due to civil or ecclesiastic rulers, till their constitution be without faults; and thus all human authority is cashiered as sinful, while the world stands; for, where shall we find a blameless constitution, but in that high and holy place, where JEHOVAH hath his throne? Here we have an anti-government principle with a witness! And what is still worse, this objection militates against the authority of the supreme Lawgiver, enjoining obedience to civil and ecclesiastic rulers; for, according to it, we must not obey that divine precept, *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers*, because there are faults in their constitution. And according to it, we must not obey that divine precept, *Obey them that have the rule over you*, because there are faults in their constitution. If the principle, contained in this objection, were universally reduced to practice, the whole world of mankind would be a lawless mob, a great congregation of rebels against God and men.

2. There

2. There are good as well as evil things in the constitution. In the Coronation-oath, the king of England solemnly promises at his coronation, and swears, " That he will govern the people of this kingdom of England, and the dominions thereunto belonging, according to the statutes in parliament agreed on, and the laws and customs of the same : That he will, to the utmost of his power, maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant religion established by law." By an act of Union, the king of England, at his succession to the throne, likewise takes, and subscribes an oath, to preserve the Protestant religion, and Presbyterian church-government in Scotland. Some have observed, that in this oath are expressed all the duties that a monarch can owe to his people ; namely, to govern according to law ; to execute judgment in mercy ; and to maintain the established religion — An obligation on the king by oath, to preserve Episcopal church-government in England is, no doubt, an evil in the constitution ; but that this evil renders it criminal in Presbyterians to obey him in things lawful, never was, and never will be proven by the dictates of the Holy Ghost. But while Presbyterians testify against this, and other evils, in the constitution, let them be thankful to God for the good things in it. *For every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

To have a king obliged by oath, to maintain, to the utmost of his power, the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant religion, would be esteemed an invaluable blessing from heaven by the remnant of the woman's seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, in Popish countries, where the dragon is wroth with them, and makes war with them, by the merciless inquisition, by goals and fetters, by the strangling cord and burning pile, by the breaking wheel and other hellish engines of cruelty. Had God dealt with us as we deserve, we had been this day, like many other Protestants, groaning under the iron yoke of Antichrist, and pushed by the Romish monster, which hath two horns like a lamb, and speaks as a dragon. But if any should so far despise their own mercies, as to imagine, That the evil things in the British constitution spoil all the good things in it, and render them of no value, the rod of reproof, and not reasoning is their due. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee? Deut. xxxii. 6*

*Obj. 5.* " To pray that God may bless our sovereign King GEORGE, and the apparent heir of the crown : that he may blast all the plots, or efforts of whatever enemies, open or secret, against the Protestant succession to the throne of these kingdoms, in the family of Hanover ; that he may be gracious " to



“ to the high courts of Parliament, in this and the neighbouring  
 “ island, and lead them to proper measures for the honour of Christ,  
 “ must be understood as containing earnest supplications to the  
 “ Lord, that he may continue and preserve an *Eraſtian* con-  
 “ stitution.”

*Ans.* This objection is much of a piece with the preceding, and what is said in answer to it, might serve as an answer to this. But as arguments are never wanting to refute error, in whatever shape it appears, let the following things be considered as an answer to this objection. 1. The supplications in this prayer are not understood by the supplicants in the sense of the objectors, nor doth the Hearer of prayer understand them in such a sense. 2. The sense alledged, is neither expressed, nor in the least insinuated, in the words of this prayer; and to impose a sense on them, which is neither expressed nor implied, is a bearing false witness against our neighbour. 3. Praying for God's blessing to civil rulers, and for long life and prosperity to them, doth by no means imply a praying, at the same time, for a continuance of the evils in their constitution. The scripture tells us, that to bid a *false teacher, God-speed*, is to be *partaker of his evil deeds*; but it no where tells us, that to pray for the grace of God, and for long life and prosperity, even to bad men, is to be partaker of their evil deeds. If a prayer for God's blessing to civil rulers, is inseparably connected, with a praying for the continuance of the evils in their constitution, we must not pray for them while the world standeth, nor yet for ecclesiastic rulers; for there have always been evils in the constitution of both, and will be to the end of time. Nay, according to this objection, we must not pray for grace to sinners, because this is a praying for the continuance of the reign of sin in them. We must not pray for more grace to saints, because this is a prayer for the continuance of the remains of sin in them. And for the same reason we must not pray for ourselves, whether we be saints, or sinners. 4. To pray for a blessing to civil rulers, and for long life and prosperity, not only to the *meek and gentle*, but also to the *froward*, is warranted by scripture precept and example. *See the peace of the city*, said Jeremiah to the captives in Babylon, *and pray unto the Lord for it*, Jer. xxix. 7. Paul exhorts, *That prayers be made for kings, and for all that are in authority*, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. Our Lord exhorts to *bless them that curse us*, and to *pray for them which persecute us*, Matth. v. 44. Nehemiah said unto king Artaxerxes, *Let the king live for ever*, Neh. ii. 3. and Daniel to King Darius, *O king live for ever*, Dan vi. 21. Did the captives in Babylon pray for the continuance of idolatry in that city, when they prayed for peace to it? Did the primitive Christians pray for the continuance of idolatry in the Roman empire, when they prayed for the heathen emperors? Did Nehemiah and Daniel pray that king Artaxerxes and Darius might continue idolaters, when they prayed for long

life to them? And when the disciples of Christ pray for their persecutors, do they pray that their persecuting spirit may continue with them?—Every person, not overwhelmed in the gulf of strong prejudice, will answer all these questions in the negative. And if these prayers for heathen rulers were without blame in the sight of God, how comes it to pass that Presbyterians in our day, must be esteemed so criminal in praying for the blessing of God, and for long life and prosperity, to Christian rulers? Is there an inseparable connexion between men and their sins, and between the good and evil things in a civil constitution in these last days, which was not in the Mosaic and apostolic ages? \*

*Obj. 6.* “The ministers and people, who disown the present civil government, are very *religious people*, and this is no weak argument, that they are in the right.”

*Ans.* The example of a good man is to be followed no further, than it is an imitation of the example of Christ: *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*, 1 Cor. xi. 1. Peter was a good man, and an inspired apostle, and yet Paul *withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed*. Doctrines taught by good men are to be rejected as reprobate silver, when they are not supported by a *Thus saith the Lord*. *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*, Isa. viii. 20. *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*. It was a good reply of Augustine, to a clamorous disputant, crying, “Hear me, hear me:” *Nec ego et, nec tu me, sed ambo audiemus Christum, i. e.* “I will neither hear thee, nor do thou hear me; but let us both hear Christ.” Error gilded over with an appearance of truth, or dressed up in the gold ring and gay clothing of piety, is far more dangerous, than when it appears in its own tattered rags; it is a snare in Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor, to catch the weak and unwary, though well-meaning Christian.—There are good and bad among the Reformed, as well as among other denominations.

*Obj. 7.* “Our national and solemn engagements, and especially the National Covenant, oblige us in these lands to disown the authority of every king, who is not a Presbyterian, and a Covenanter.”

*Ans.* As an answer to this objection, let the following things be attentively considered.

1. There is no such obligation expressed, nor in the least insinuated, in any one article or sentence of the Covenants. If these Covenants had bound the Covenanters, and their posterity, to disown every king of Britain, who is not a Presbyterian, and a Cove-

\* Praying that our rulers may be directed to proper measures for promoting the glory of Christ, is not praying for their continuance in their evils. Praying for a spirit of reformation to them, is not praying for Erastianism, nor for any other evils to be continued.



Covenanter, they would have been bonds of iniquity, as we shall see immediately.

2. The Covenanters themselves never understood their Covenants, as laying them under any such engagement, as is abundantly evident, both from their *doctrine* and *practice*.—In the twenty-third chapter of their Confession, sect 4. they teach, “That  
“ infidelity, or difference of religion, doth not make void the  
“ magistrate’s just and legal authority, nor free the people from  
“ their due obedience : from which ecclesiastical persons are not  
“ exempted.” It is a most wild, and groundless imagination, that the compilers of the Confession understood this article, as principally relating to the condition of a people, emerging out of the darkness and superstition of Paganism or Popery. Did the wise, and learned, and venerable assembly of divines, convened at Westminster, compose a Confession, or any part of it, not for themselves, but for a people beginning to renounce Pagan, or Popish idolatry? To think they did so, is a senseless and whimsical dream, or the fruit of a raving imagination; for, it represents our Reformers as awfully and absurdly juggling with God and man, by confessing the faith of others, and not their own; yea, without telling that they did so, or telling what they maintained as the rule of their own practice in this matter; and all this under the solemnity of that Covenant-oath, in pursuance whereof the said Confession was composed and maintained \*. It would be much more honour done to the compilers of the Confession to say, that they erred in this article, than to impose such an absurd sense upon it : or, as Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Millan, junr. says in his Letter, page 29. “The minds of our Reformers, at this early period,  
“ do not seem to have been fully emancipated from the bondage  
“ of the national prejudice in favour of the doctrine of hereditary  
“ right to the crown.”

But why should such an extravagant and absurd sense be imposed on this article of the Confession, a sense so full of disgrace to the compilers of it, since the meaning is quite obvious from the words, and from the scriptures cited to prove it? The sense of this article may be given in the following words, That it is the duty of Christians to obey magistrates who are infidels, or of a different religion, in all things lawful, when there is no other in the place where God hath determined the bounds of their habitation, whether it be in Britain and Ireland, or in any other place of the world, and when it is not in their power to have any other. This was the case with Israel in the Babylonish captivity, and in the reign of Ahasuerus, when they were scattered thro’ an hundred and seven and twenty provinces. It was the case with them when they were subdued by the Romans. And the same was the case with the primitive Christians for more than three hundred years.

It  
\* Answers by the Associate Presbytery to Mr. Nairn’s reasons of dissent, page 92.

It was not in their power to have magistrates of their own religion, there were none but heathen magistrates then in the world, and they behoved either to obey these in things lawful, or to go out of the world.—And that the Covenanters never viewed their Covenants as binding them to disown every king in these lands, who is not a Presbyterian, and a Covenanter, is evident from their *practice*. It is an undoubted fact, that they acknowledged princes in communion with the Episcopal church of England, a long time after they were emerged from the darkness of Pagan and Popish idolatry.

3. The Covenants did not, and could not, bind the Covenanters to any thing, but what they were bound to by the law of God, prior to their covenanting. Their Covenants bound them to observe all the commandments of God, at all times, in all places, and in all circumstances of life. Now, since their Covenants obliged them to obey all the commandments, then the two following, and others of a similar nature, cannot be excepted: *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be, are ordained of God*, Rom. xiii. 1. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, &c.* 1 Pet. ii. 13.—Did it ever enter into the heads of the Covenanters that these, and the like precepts, were to have no respect to them, nor to their posterity, if any other king should fill the British throne, but a Presbyterian, and a Covenanter? To say that the above precepts are not binding in these lands, because they are Covenanters, is to say that the Covenants of our ancestors hath made void a part of the eternal rule of righteousness, at least in Britian and Ireland, when any king, but a Presbyterian and a Covenanter rules over them. This is a shameful, a sinful, and a blasphemous reproach cast on the immutable law of JEHOVAH, as if it changed with the revolutions of time. If our worthy ancestors were on the stage of time, and heard such a construction put on their Covenants, they would say, *False witnesses did rise up; they laid to our charge things that we know not*, Psalm xxxv. 11. The precepts, enjoining obedience to civil rulers, are not like the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, which were abolished by the death of Christ, because they were only *shadows of good things*, but they are binding at all times, and in all places, to the end of the world: they are some of these words of the Lord, which *endure for ever*. They were binding on God's covenanted Israel in the heathen land of Chaldea. They were binding in Paul's day, on the Christians at Rome, the metropolis of a kingdom of graven images. They were binding on Jewish converts, not only at Rome, but on these also who dwelt in Judea, that once holy, and covenanted land. And why they should not be binding in these isles of the sea, when the supreme civil ruler is not a Presbyterian, is a mystery not to be resolved by men or angels. *Do we make void the*



*the law through covenanting? God forbid: yea, we swear, that, through Christ, who strengthneth us, we will walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.—I am no enemy to covenanting, nor have any design to throw dust on our national vows; but I am bold to aver, that the solemn Covenants of our noble ancestors, which were for more than four hundred and thirty years after the law, could not disanul it, that they should make the authority of it of none effect in any one jot or tittle. And they who think otherwise, may try how they will reconcile their sentiments with the apostle's definition of the word of God, which is, that it liveth, and abideth for ever.*

I conclude the answer to this objection by observing, that since our Covenants oblige us to obey a king in all things lawful, who is an infidel, or of a different religion, when there is no other in the country where we live, and when it is not in our power to have another, then they are covenant-breakers, who disown the lawful authority of the present British king, even tho' he were an infidel, or of a different religion. And considering that our king is a Christian; and, as far as I know, one of the best kings in the world, how aggravated must their breach of covenant be in the sight of God?

*Object. 8.* “The countenance given to the Popish religion by the king, and Parliament of great Britian, is a sufficient reason to disown their authority.”

*Ans.* If every act of male-administration, loosed the subjects from the lawful commands of their princes, there could be no such thing as loyalty in this world, but every man would be a lord, and a law to himself. Are there not innumerable acts of male-administration in every state, province, and kingdom under heaven? perhaps it is not easy to determine what degree of male-administration will warrant subjects to cast off the just authority of their civil rulers. Tho' the toleration of Popery in England is a very great evil, and hath a woful tendency to promote the interest of the man of sin; yet Protestants are still in the possession of their natural, civil, and religious privileges; they may worship God according to his own appointment, without disturbance, or the least dread of danger from the powers that be. What would Protestants give for these inestimable privileges in some Popish countries, where their lives and liberties hang at the girdle of the Roman dragon, whose tender mercies are cruelty, and where the inquisition is on one hand, and the damnation of hell on the other? And bad as the toleration of Popery is, it is no worse than the countenance given by Solomon to the worship of Ashtoreth the goddess of Zidonians, to Milcom the abomination of the Amonites, and to Chemosh the abomination of Moab.—This act of male-administration did not free the subjects of Solomon from their due obedience to him. If their obedience in things lawful had been criminal, certainly God would have warned them

them of it, by his servants the prophets. Because Solomon went after other gods, the Lord threatened to rend the kingdom from him, and to give it to his servant: but no threatening is denounced against his subjects for their obedience to his just and legal authority.

*Obj.* 9. "How can Seceders reconcile their principles anent civil government, with their principle and practice, in separating from an established church or ministry, whose constitution they acknowledge to be good, and who, being Presbyterially ordained, are still countenanced by the body of the people? If their doctrine about civil government be right, then all the defections, and male-administrations in the church, could never have been a ground of their separation from her; but on the contrary, they should still have continued in communion with her, and subjection to her, in matters lawful, in a way of testifying against the same; and essaying their reformation, by all means that were habile for them."

*Ans.* If common sense, and sound reasoning, cannot extricate Seceders from this dilemma, they will cut their way thro' it by a very gentle touch of the sword of the Spirit. And to loose this apparently well-tied knot, let the following things be considered.

1. The church of Scotland cast Seceders out of her communion; and therefore they could not continue in it, in a way of testifying against her defections.

2. The objectors confound a civil and religious connexion, which are things as distinct as light and darkness. To be a member of the church, and a subject in the state, are very different things: thus openly profane sinners are subjects in the state, but not members of the church. Communion with any church flows not from, nor hath the least dependence upon loyalty with princes; therefore to infer the necessity of church-fellowship from a dutiful obedience to civil authority, is a false, and absurd way of reasoning, good for nothing, but to deceive the hearts of the simple.

3. When any of the heathens in the Roman empire, embraced the Christian religion, they dropt all religious connection with the Pagan priests, and their idolatrous worship, and joined themselves to the church of Christ, but they still continued to be dutiful subjects in the state. Now, if Seceders are inconsistent in their principles and practice, it may be said in their defence, they are *going forth by the footsteps of the flock of Christ*.

4. Fellowship with false teachers is hurtful, and often eternally ruining to the souls of men; and therefore a religious connection with them is prohibited: *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's cloathing, but inwardly are ravening wolves*. But obedience to the lawful commands of princes can neither hurt, nor ruin the souls of men; and therefore the Christians at Rome are commanded to obey the heathen emperors: *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God*.

*Obj.*



Obj. 10. " The argument for subjection to the present government, drawn from the 13th chapter of the Romans, is not conclusive ; for, how can such amiable qualifications as are found in the magistracy, spoken of in this passage, be applied to the heathen emperors? Can the Spirit of God mean Pagan, persecuting, idolatrous princes, when he says, *Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.—He is the minister of God to thee for good.—He is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil?*"

Ans. When the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions ; and the objector is not aware, that he is proving a greater than Solomon with his pretended hard questions, even the Almighty himself, as we shall see presently. And as an answer to this bold interrogation, let the following things be considered.

1. That the first verse of the 13th chapter of the Romans, contains a commandment to the Christians at Rome to obey magistrates is certain ; and that there were none but heathen magistrates when they received the commandment, cannot be denied, as we formerly observed.

2. The Spirit of God expressly applies the characters, mentioned in the 3d and 4th verses, to these heathen magistrates : for, *rulers are not a terror to good works, &c.* What rulers? None surely, but these who are called the *higher powers*, and the *powers that be*, in the first verse. Now, after the Spirit of God hath made such a plain application of these characters to heathen rulers, even the worst of them not excepted, it is daring presumption, in a worm sprung out of the earth, to ask, Can the Spirit of God mean Pagan idolaters? The words of the apostle, in another case, are very applicable to the bold interrogator, *Who art thou, O man, that thou repliest against God?* It is just as criminal, to say to the Almighty, *Why speakest thou thus?* as to say, *Why hast thou made me thus?* We are bound to believe the words of the holy One, even when we cannot understand them.

3. The characters, mentioned by the apostle in the 3d and 4th verses, are motives to enforce the precept in the first verse ; and if these characters are no way applicable to the *powers that be*, or the then heathen magistrates, I am sure, more is required than the wit of a man, to make sense of the precept.

4. The characters, in this passage, are intended to shew, what all magistrates ought to be ; and, in this respect, are as applicable to heathen, as to Christian magistrates : *Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil* : that is, their office and duty is not, to punish men for their good, but for their evil works. *He is the minister of God to thee for good* : that is, the magistrate, who is God's vicegerent, ought to preserve the natural, civil, and religious rights of his subjects.

5. These

5. These characters were partly fulfilled, in the administration of the heathen emperors; and they never were, nor will be perfectly exemplified, in the administration of the best Christian rulers. Tho' the heathen magistrates were guilty of the greatest male-administration, in suppressing the Christian religion by fire and sword, and so were a terror to good works; yet they were a terror to the evil works of thieves, murderers, and other pests of civil society: and in punishing these malefactors, according to the nature of their crimes, they were the ministers of God for good to their honest, and virtuous subjects.

Experience, as well as the Spirit of inspiration, taught Paul, that even a heathen ruler is the minister of God for good to men. A chief captain under Cæsar rescued this apostle from the hands of his intended murderers; he set him on a horse, gave him a numerous guard of horses and foot, and sent him safe unto Felix the governor. Even ill princes cannot help doing a great deal of good, by preserving some degree of order and government in the world. Nebuchadnezzar was the minister of God for good to men; and therefore compared to a tree, *the leaves whereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwell in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it*, Dan. iv. 12. A certain orator, named Tertullus, spake the truth, whatever was his end, when he said to Felix the governor, *By thee we enjoy great quietness, and very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence.*—It is a maxim with some, and I see no reason to call in question the truth of it, that a bad government is better than no government. What would this world be without government, but a den of dragons, and a mountain of prey, and men upon it like the fishes of the sea, the greater devouring the lesser?

6. As high characters are given to heathen rulers in other portions of scripture, as to the Roman emperors in this. Cyrus is called *the Lord's anointed*, and Nebuchadnezzar *his servant*. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, *whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him*, Isa. xlv. 1. *And I will send all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon my servant, and I will bring them against this land*, Jer. xxv. 9.

Obj. 11. "Paul himself calls Nero a lion; *I was delivered*, " said he, *out of the mouth of the lion*, 2 Tim. iv. 17. And " how is it consistent to apply to the same person these two contradictory characters, *the minister of God for good to men*, and " *a lion to slay the innocent*? Is there a single instance in all the word " of God, where God's moral ordinance of magistracy is exhibited " under the emblem of a voracious lion?" \*

Ans. In

\* Letter from Stirling, p. 55.



*Ans.* In a former objection, we had *church-fellowship* and *civil society* blended together; in this, the *ordinance of magistracy* and the *magistrate* are confounded in like manner. The objector supposes here, that his opponent cannot apply the characters in Rom. xiii. 1.—4. to heathen rulers, without landing himself in this absurdity, that the word of God calls God's *moral ordinance* of magistracy a *lion*. Had the objector considered, that the *ordinance* of magistracy is one thing, and the *magistrate* another, he would not have exhibited so much sophistical reasoning, against the plain dictates of the Holy Ghost; reasoning which hath no other tendency, but to deceive the hearts of the simple.—But as an answer to the pungent questions of the objector, let the following things be considered.

1. It is granted, that God's moral ordinance of magistracy is never exhibited in scripture under the emblem of a voracious lion, nor of any other animals ranging the forest, and destroying to the ground their defenceless prey: but the scripture frequently exhibits magistrates under such emblems, when they pervert the end of their office, by male administration. Ezekiel calls Zedekiah king of Judah, a *profane* and *wicked* prince, chap. xxi. 25. Micah calls the princes of Israel, *king of Bashan*, chap. iv. 1. Christ calls Herod a *fox*, Luke xiii. 32. Paul calls Nero, a *lion*, 2 Tim. iv. 17.

2. There is no inconsistency in applying to the same person two characters as opposite as light and darkness, as heaven and hell, as Christ and Belial. Let the objector read his Bible with some more attention, and he will find, that such an application is no uncommon thing. Solomon applies to himself the opposite characters of *brutishness* and *wisdom*: *I am more brutish than any man*. And, moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge. The spouse applies to herself the opposite characters of *blackness* and *beauty*: *I am black, but comely*. Paul applies to himself the opposite characters of *weakness* and *strength*: *When I am weak, then am I strong*. Peter is described both as a *devil* and as a *servant* and an *apostle of Jesus Christ*. Here we have a variety of examples in which two very opposite characters are applied to the same person; and there is no inconsistency in their application. Thus for example, Peter is very justly called *Satan*, because he acted the part of the devil, in advising his blessed master not to go unto Jerusalem. And he is called a *servant* and an *apostle of Jesus Christ*, because Christ called him to the apostolic office, and because he was faithful in the discharge of it.—From these examples it is plain, that the scripture applies very opposite characters to the same person; and that there is neither inconsistency, nor contradiction, in the application: and there is just as little inconsistency in the word of God, when it applies to the magistrate, whether he be a heathen or a Christian, these two very opposite characters, a *lion* to slay the innocent, and the *minister of God* for good men. Nero, and other heathen

emperors justly merited the character of the lion, when they shed the blood of the saints. The character of the ministers of God for good to men, was due to them, when they punished evil doers, such as the thieving thief, and the murderer, as was formerly observed. Saul deserved the character of the lion, when he slew in one day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. But the character of the *minister of God* for good to Israel, was applicable to him, when he fought against, and subdued their enemies.—David was one of the best of kings, a *minister of God* for good to men, but he deserved the character of a lion ranging the forest, and destroying to the ground the defenceless prey, when he put the Ammonites under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln.—In a word, when the magistrate perverts the end of his office, by oppressing his subjects, he is justly called a lion; and when he executes justice and judgment, when he defends the poor and fatherless, and doth justice to the afflicted and needy, he is no less justly denominated, the *minister of God* for good to men. There is a mixture of good and evil in the actions of all men; and there neither is, nor can be a contradiction, in applying to the same person a disgraceful name, when he doth evil, and a good name, when he doth good; for such an application is nothing else but a denomination given to man, according to his works.—The man, therefore, who sees a contradiction, in applying two opposite characters to the same person, either looks through a false medium, or has not his senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

*Obj.* 12. “The king of Great Britain, &c. is an Erastian king.” That is, the supreme judge in the church, as well as in the state.

*Ans.* The king has too much power in church-matters, but it is not true, that his power in them is supreme. The oath of allegiance, acknowledging the supremacy of king Charles II. and of his successors, over all persons, and in all causes, was rescinded at the happy Revolution in 1688, both by the English, and Scotch parliament. The English parliament abrogated the oaths of allegiance, and supremacy, which had been sworn to the late king, and framed the two following oaths, to be taken instead of them.—

“ I A.B. do sincerely promise and swear, that I will be faithful,  
 “ and bear true allegiance to their Majesties King WILLIAM and  
 “ Queen MARY. So help me GOD ”——“ I A.B. do swear,  
 “ that I do from my heart abhor, detest, and abjure, as impious  
 “ and heretical, this damnable doctrine and position, that princes  
 “ excommunicated or deprived by the Pope, or any authority of  
 “ the See of Rome, may be deposed, or murdered by the subjects,  
 “ or any others whatsoever. And I do declare, that no foreign  
 “ prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, has, or ought to have  
 “ any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority,  
 “ ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm. So help me, GOD.”

“ The



“ The Lords and Commons, assembled at Westminster, ordered  
 “ this deed to be ingrossed in parchment, inrolled among the rolls  
 “ of parliament, and recorded in Chancery \*.” “ And when the  
 “ Convention of Estates in Scotland were turned into a parliament.  
 “ they rescinded the act of parliament in 1669, which established  
 “ the king’s unlimited supremacy over the church †.”

*Obj.* 13. “ It is evident from Hof. viii. 4. that subjection is not  
 “ due to the present civil government. *They have set up kings,*  
 “ *but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not.*”

*Ans.* The shadow of an argument is not in this verse, against  
 subjection to the present civil government in its lawful commands.  
 Israel is blamed here, not for submitting to the lawful authority of  
 their civil rulers, but for not asking counsel at the mouth of the  
 Lord, when they set them up. They set up kings, but not by  
 God, says Mr. Henry, when they rejected Samuel, in whom the  
 Lord was their King; and when they revolted from the house of  
 David. They made princes, and I knew it not; i. e. I knew it  
 not from them, they did not ask counsel at my mouth; as  
 Mr. Henry also observes. If there be any argument in this verse,  
 against subjection to the present civil government, it must be framed  
 thus: The nation did not ask counsel at the mouth of the Lord,  
 in the erection of it; and therefore subjection to it is sinful.—  
 If this reasoning be just, it will be very difficult, or rather impossible,  
 ever to find civil authority upon earth, to which any subjection is  
 due. Very few of mankind set the Lord before them in the choice  
 of their magistrates. There never was a nation, and never will be,  
 till the glory of the latter days come, of which the Lord may not  
 justly say, *They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made*  
*princes, and I knew it not.* If subjection to magistrates depends  
 upon the pious regard of the people to God, in setting them up,  
 we must with-hold subjection, until we know the secrets of the  
 hearts of men, or whether they sincerely acknowledged the Lord;  
 and thus a dutiful obedience, even to the best of kings and princes,  
 is rendered impossible.

*Obj.* 14. “ The principles of Seceders are disloyal principles,  
 “ and more inimical to the present royal family, than the prin-  
 “ ciples of the Old Dissenters. The principle of the Secession  
 “ makes the right of princes to the throne, to hinge purely upon  
 “ the fluctuating voice of a majority; and allows a majority,  
 “ inclining to do so, a lawful power to degrade the prince, without  
 “ any cause of offence given by him;—a power at pleasure,  
 “ wantonly to pluck the prince from his throne, and to exalt the  
 “ the basest of men unto it. Had the Pretender to the British  
 “ throne,

\* Hist. of the Revolution in England, by an anonymous author, p. 264. &c.

† Wodrow’s Hist. of the Church of Scotland, Vol. 1d. p. 632. And  
 Brown’s Compendious Hist. of the Church of Scotland, p. 317.

“ throne, in his late unsuccessful attempt, in the year 1745, been  
 “ so fortunate, as to have procured a majority of voices, in the  
 “ British dominions, in favours of his claim to the throne; then,  
 “ according to the principles of the Secession, he would have been  
 “ the only lawful prince; and the house of Hanover, with the  
 “ reigning prince, must have been stripped of all right to that  
 “ throne!—And Seceders themselves would be heard to join the  
 “ salutation of the great body, *GOD save the new King.*” \*

*Ans.* Let the following things be considered as an answer to this objection. 1. It contains much accusation, but nothing of argumentation. Dust is thrown against the men, but nothing said against their cause. The objection is calculate to provoke, and gives occasion for severity; but the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. 2. It is true, that Seceders allow the majority of a nation a right, to choose their princes, and they are not ashamed that this is their principle. But it is a false accusation, “ That their principle allows  
 “ a majority a lawful power, to degrade a prince without a cause;  
 “ to pluck him wantonly from his throne, and to exalt the basest  
 “ of men unto it.” I doubt much, if the objector himself believes this accusation to be true. The ground of the doubt is, that neither he, nor any other man, can produce a single sentence, in all the publications of the Secession, where such doctrine is taught, either in express words, or by fair consequence. If there be a second edition of the Letter from Stirling, it is expected, that the author will either cancel this accusation against Seceders, or direct the reader where to find a proof. 3. Perhaps it is not easy to tell, what Seceders would do, in the case supposed; but it is not very likely, that they would be very forward, in joining the great body, and in saying, *God save the new king.* Instead of supposing, that they would be so very fond of a Popish prince, may we not charitably think, that they would bewail the unhappy change; that they would sympathize with their degraded sovereign, and pray, that God would restore him, and their judges as at the first, and their counsellors as at the beginning. Charity is kind.—Is not easily provoked.—Thinketh no evil. 4. If the most High, who ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men †, should give a popish stranger to rule in these isles of the sea, I ask our Reformed Brethren, What precept of the divine law, would Seceders break, in being subject to that stranger, in all things lawful? “ There may  
 “ be cases, said a very sensible Covenanter, wherein it is lawful  
 “ for a people to yield subjection to a lawless tyrant, when groan-  
 “ ing under his over-powering yoke, under which they must  
 “ patiently bear the indignation of the Lord, until he arise, and  
 “ plead his own cause, and execute judgment in the earth; until  
 “ which

\* Letter from Stirling to Messrs. Balfrage, &c. p. 19, 20.

† Dan. iv. 17.



“ which time they must kiss the rod, as in the hand of God, and  
 “ own and adore the holiness and sovereignty of that providence,  
 “ which hath subjected them under such a slavery.” \*

*Obj.* 15. “ The parliament of Scotland did enact, ordain, and  
 “ declare, That before the king’s majesty, who now is, or any of  
 “ his successors, shall be admitted to the exercise of his royal power,  
 “ he shall declare by his solemn oath, under his hand and seal, his  
 “ allowance of the National Covenant, and of the Solemn League  
 “ and Covenant, and obligation to prosecute the ends thereof. †  
 “ No British king since the Revolution, has come under the above  
 “ obligation; and therefore subjection, even in things lawful,  
 “ ought not to be given.”

*Ans.* Let the following things be considered as an answer to this objection. 1. The above act of parliament was very proper at that time, when Charles I. was grasping at arbitrary power, and claiming it as a prerogative of the crown, to model the government of the church as he pleased. No British king, since the Revolution, hath had, or ever claimed any such power. 2. The end of the National, and of the Solemn League and Covenant, was to preserve our religious and civil privileges. The British king is obliged by oath to preserve these privileges; which I take to be, a material allowance of the National, and of the Solemn League and Covenant. When the king of Great Britain, &c. is crowned, “ He solemnly promises, and swears, that he will, “ to the utmost of his power, maintain the laws of God, the “ true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant religion “ established by law.” The reader will find a fuller reply to this objection, by looking to the 7th objection, and the answer given unto it.

*Obj.* 16. “ A due measure of those qualifications which God “ requires in his word, are essentially necessary to the constitution “ and investiture of lawful authority over a Christian people. ‡ “ The British magistrates have not the due measure of qualifica- “ tions required in the word of God, and therefore subjection is “ not due to them.”

*Ans.* If a due measure of those qualifications required in the word of God, “ be essentially necessary to the being of a lawful “ magistrate over any people; there never was, nor ever can be “ any such thing as a lawful sovereign in this world. Is any “ mere man perfectly endued with what the precept requires? or “ is he fully able to keep the commands of God in this life? If not, “ how can he possibly have a due measure, in the eye of God’s “ law;

\* Hind Let Loose, p. 290, 291. old edition.

† Charles I. & II. Parl. 2. Sess. 2. Act 15. At Edin. Feb. 7th, 1649.

‡ Reformed Test. p. 192. near the foot.

“law, of the qualifications which it requires?” \* The measure of qualifications required of Christian magistrates, and people, in the word of God, is a perfect measure. The imperfect services of Christians are accepted in the Beloved; but the law requires nothing less than perfection: *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* But perhaps we are doing the Reformed Presbytery injustice here; for by a due measure, they do not mean a perfect measure of scripture-qualifications, but some measure of them. This is their meaning, for they say, “These alone, according to Scripture, are magistrates of God’s institution, who are in some measure possessed of these qualifications.” † And who ever denied, that Christian magistrates should be possessed of some measure of scriptural qualifications? The Reformed Presbytery will never be able to prove, that the present magistrates have not some measure of scriptural qualifications. No people was ever so senseless, as to put the reins of civil government into the hands of idiots, or bedlamites.

#### S E C T. IV.

*Wherein is shewed, that the REFORMED PRESBYTERY defend their Cause by False Accusations.*

THE reformed Presbytery have tried to defend their cause by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; but, as if they had found this weapon to be unfit for their purpose, they have thrown it away, and taken to themselves the carnal weapons of slander and falsehood. In their Testimony, they testify against the Associate Presbytery, for error in doctrine, treachery in covenant, partiality and tyranny in discipline and government, for corruption in worship, and for barefacedly belying the scriptures of truth. Testimony, page 112, 155, 136. They represent Seceders as maintaining, that the people, without regard to scripture qualifications, have an essential right to choose whom they please to the exercise of civil government;—as allowing civil society a negative over the supreme Law-giver;—as exalting the will and inclination of the creature above the will of the Creator, which is the very definition of sin: Test. page 116, 118. And Mr. Thorburn, in his *Vindiciae*, page. 21. represents Seceders as preferring the law of nature to divine revelation, making the one an unalterable, eternal standard of morality, and the other a violable mutable kind of thing. ‡

In

\* A Review of the Antigovernment Scheme, p. 29. near the foot.

† Test. p. 121. near the foot.

‡ It is no new thing for disputers to walk in slanders; to revile an antagonist, when they have nothing to say against his arguments; to throw dirt



In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. And what proof does the Reformed Presbytery bring, to ascertain the truth of this criminal libel, which they have put into the hands of the Seceders? Why, say they, the Seceders are subject to the British government in things lawful. A mighty proof indeed! but mighty as it is, it is good for Seceders that it hath been tried, and cast long ago, at the bar of scripture, and by the approved example of the saints in the ages that are past.

If the above black catalogue of crimes and errors are the unavoidable consequence of obedience to the lawful commands of the present British government, then the Old-Testament saints were guilty of them; for they obeyed the lawful commands of the heathen kings of Babylon, of Media, and Persia. The primitive Christians were guilty of them, for they obeyed the lawful commands of heathen emperors for the space of three hundred years. All the Protestant churches at this day are guilty of them, except the Reformed Presbytery and their followers. Nay, I may add here, that, if the above crimes and errors are the necessary consequences of the practice of Seceders, our Lord himself would have been guilty of them, for its beyond all doubt, that he performed an act of obedience to Cæsar, when he paid him tribute. It is submitted here to every unprejudiced reader, if the Reformed Presbytery has not brought a false accusation, not only against Seceders, but likewise against Old-Testament saints; against New-Testament saints in primitive times; against all the saints now on the face of the whole earth, themselves and their followers excepted; and against the adored Author of the Christian religion.

## S E C T. V.

*They defend their Cause by gross Misrepresentations of some Passages of the Holy Scriptures.*

THE following quotations from their Testimony, plainly shew, that in several instances they have erred, not knowing the scriptures, and that the armour of truth has not been on the right hand and on the left.

1. They say, "That the word of God acknowledges David the "rightful sovereign over all Israel for the space of forty years."\* For proof of this assertion, they cite 1 Chron. xxix. 26, 27. "Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. And the  
time

dirt at the man, in hopes of blasting the cause. These arts may take, in the hurry of a dispute, but they will either be matter of repentance, with the grace of God; or of reproach, without it. Such methods are always the scandal of a good cause, and a dead weight to a bad one. No lie can be of the truth, or capable of doing it good.

\* Test. p. 134.

time that he reigned over Israel, was forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem." The above assertion has not the smallest countenance from this, nor any other passage in the word of God. Three things are said in the verses quoted, concerning the reign of David.

1. That he reigned over all Israel. And the time that he reigned over all Israel, was not, for the space of forty, but of three and thirty years, as we will see presently. 2. It is said, The time that he reigned over Israel, not over ALL Israel, was forty years, i. e. forty years elapsed from the beginning, to the conclusion of his reign. 3. The reign of David is divided here into two periods. "Seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem." Now, if we compare this portion of scripture, with 2 Sam. v. 4, 5. we will find the truth to be, not "That the word of God acknowledges David the rightful sovereign over ALL Israel, for the space of forty years;" but that it acknowledges him the rightful sovereign over the tribe of Judah for the space of seven years, and the rightful sovereign over all the tribes of Israel, for the space of three and thirty years. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah. Little as the word ALL is, it should not be added to the words of God. "Add thou not unto his words, least he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." It will not help the Reformed Presbytery to say here, That David was anointed to the kingdom by Samuel, and so was rightful sovereign over all Israel, for the space of forty years; for in their Test. p. 144. they grant, "That God has lodged this power in the people, of conveying the right of civil authority to their magistrates." How then, upon their own principles, could David be a rightful sovereign over Israel, seven years before they chose him to be their sovereign? In defending a bad cause, that saying is often fulfilled, "The legs of the lame are not equal."

2. They say, "That David was wholly ejected, both out of the hearts and territories of Israel; and not only the throne, but the will and consent of the people given up to Absalom." \* As a proof of this saying, they quote five chapters in the 2d Book of Samuel, chap. xv. xvi. xvii. xviii. xix. A large proof indeed for a single sentence! But large as it is, the above saying is not supported by it. I cannot believe, "That David was wholly ejected out of the hearts of Israel," when I read in the 15th chapter, That David, in his flight from Jerusalem, had six hundred men with him, and multitudes of country people. These were such hearty friends to David, that they wept with a loud voice. And we cannot suppose it to be true of all Absalom's followers, "That David

\* Test. p. 135



"was wholly ejected out of their hearts." With Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called, and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing. I cannot believe, "That David was wholly ejected out of the territories of "Israel;" when I read in the 17th chapter, That when David fled from Absalom, he came to Mahanaim. Mahanaim was not without the territories of Israel. It was a city of Israel, on the east of Jordan, given by the tribe of Gad to the Levites of the family of Merari, Josh. xxi. 38. I cannot believe, "That not "only the throne, but the will and consent of the people, was "given up to Absalom;" when I read in the 28th chapter, That David was on the head of an armed host, consisting of hundreds, and thousands. But perhaps it will be said here, That we have set up, and are fighting with a man of straw; that the Reformed Presbytery never meant to teach, that David had no hearty friends and followers in Israel; but that the throne was given up to Absalom, by the will and consent of the majority of Israel. If this be their sentiment, some other proof must be brought to support it, than the history of Absalom's rebellion. It is neither expressed, nor implied, in any part of that history, that the majority of Israel was in the interest of Absalom. The conspiracy indeed was strong, for the people increased continually with Absalom, chap. xv. 12. Twenty thousand of the conspirators were slain in the wood of Ephraim, chap. xviii. 6, 7. These texts intimate, that great numbers were in Absalom's interest, but not, that the majority of Israel was in it. The word ALL, is applied to the followers of Absalom. *Absalom passed over Jordan, he and ALL the men of Israel with him*, chap. xvii. 24. But if this word ALL, proves, that Absalom had the majority; it will prove, that David had it also: and certainly each of them could not have it. *The king passed over the brook Kidron, and ALL the people passed over toward the way of the wilderness*, chap. xv. 23. *Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron*. These words imply, not that the usurper obtained the will and consent of the majority to reign; but that he left no stone unturned to obtain it. The counsel of Hushai was not followed, *That all Israel be generally gathered unto Absalom, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that is by the sea shore for multitude*. From this it is evident to a demonstration, that the throne was not given to Absalom, by the will and consent of the major part of Israel. — The will and consent of the majority was not asked, and therefore could not be given.

3. They say, "Adonijah had obtained the ascendancy, both in "respect of actual possession, and the inclination and consent of the "majority of the nation; the consent was general." \* As a proof of this assertion, they quote 1 Kings i. 5, 7, 9, 11, 18, 25. And

G

chap.

\* Text. p. 135.

chap. ii. 15. A simple reading of these verses may convince any man of common sense, that the above assertion is utterly false. *Adonijah exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him, ver. 5.* He exalted himself, and doth it follow from this, that he was exalted by the majority of the nation? Were his horsemen, and his fifty men running before him, the major part of the many thousands of Israel? *He conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah, helped him, ver. 7.* Was the help of two traitors, the help of the majority of the nation? *Adonijah slew sheep and oxen, and fat cattle, by the stone of Zohemoth, which is by En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants, ver. 9.* All the men of Judah, must be understood of the great men of Judah, as is evident from their being called, the king's servants. It would be ridiculous to suppose, that Adonijah invited all the inhabitants of Judah to an entertainment at En-rogel. And this word ALL, must be taken in a limited sense, even as to the great men of Judah, the king's servants, as we learn from ver. 10. *But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother he called not. Adonijah reigneth, ver. 18.* They eat and drink before him, and say, *God save king Adonijah!* By whose consent did he reign? Not by the consent of the majority of the nation, but of a few aspiring accomplices, carousing at their cups, and wishing him an happy reign. *Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, said Adonijah to Bath-sheba, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brothers: for it was his from the Lord, chap. ii. 15.* Adonijah being a party, too much credit should not be given to his testimony. *He that is first in his own cause, seemeth just: but his neighbour cometh, and searcheth him out.* Adonijah spake not the truth, says Mr Henry, for the faces only of a few of Israel were on him. It will not help the Reformed Presbytery, to say here, *That the people in general expected, that Adonijah would succeed his father in the kingdom, because he was his eldest son then alive; for tho' it should be granted, that this general expectation was among the people, yet it doth not appear from any part of the history of Adonijah's conspiracy, that he had the actual possession of the throne, by the consent of the majority; nay we have no ground to think, that their consent was ever asked. If Adonijah reigned by the inclinations and consent of the generality, how came he and his company at En-rogel, to run away like men ashamed, and confounded, when they heard that Solomon sat on the throne of the kingdom? 1 Kings i. 4, 9. How came Joab, a man of courage and resolution, so quickly to desert the cause of his new master? If a majority only of the forces of Israel had been in the interest of Adonijah, it is not likely, that Joab their general would have fled for safety to the horns of the altar.*



4. They say, "That David, in expectation of the Lord's promise, resisted Saul as an unjust usurper." \* No scripture is cited for proof of this saying; it is a spurious brat, but not laid down at the door of the sanctuary. Saul was not an unjust usurper. He did not climb to the kingdom by force, or fraud, but found it, when he was seeking his father's asses, 1 Sam. ix. 10, 11. He was guilty of several acts of male-administration, but not of usurpation; and therefore David could not resist him as an usurper. From the time that Samuel anointed David to be king, to the day of Saul's death, we have not one instance of his resisting Saul as an usurper, but many instances to the contrary. *Who, said Ahimelech to Saul, is so faithful among all thy servants, as David, who is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?* After his anointing, he became Saul's armour-bearer. He fought under Saul as king of Israel, and slew Goliath, who had defied the God of the armies of Israel. He fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter. He spared the life of Saul once and again, when it was in the power of his hand to take it away. He cut off the skirt of his robe, when he could as easily have cut off his head. He said to Abishai, who proposed to kill Saul, *The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed.* The king of Israel came out to seek for David, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains: but David never resisted the king of Israel as an unjust usurper.

Passing several other false assertions in their Testimony, it is submitted here to the judgment of the candid reader, whether or not, these now considered have the least foundation in the word of God. Their design in the scriptures quoted to prove the above assertions, and others of a similar nature in their Testimony, is to support their favourite distinction between a providential, and a preceptive magistrate. This distinction, so far as I know, hath no foundation in the word of God, and therefore cannot direct our faith and practice. Kings are distributed in scripture, into good and bad, but not into preceptive and providential. It would be ridiculous, to apply this distinction to mankind in general, or to say, that wicked men are providential men. and good men are preceptive men. All men, good and bad, come into the world, and live in it, according to the will of adorable providence; and all kings, good and bad, fill their thrones according to the same sovereign will. Prov. viii. 15, 16. *By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.* Some of these kings and princes have a greater, and some of them a lesser measure of scriptural qualifications; and others of them have none of these qualifications at all, like Ahab, who sold himself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. When it is the will of the all-wise God, to appoint the lot of his people in the territories of

princes, who have very few scriptural qualifications, or none at all, let them not say these are providential princes, and what part have we in them? Let them rather say to their Father which is in heaven, *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.* And let them be subject to their rulers in all things lawful; and not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

The Testimony of the Reformed Presbytery contains many excellent things, and their zeal manifested in it for a Covenanted Work of Reformation, and against defections from the same, is worthy of praise. But their handling the word of the Lord deceitfully, in several parts of it, is a dead flie in the ointment of the apothecary. A perversion of scripture may promote the religion of the man of sin, but it will never do an acceptable service to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. The ministers of the God of truth should have the armour of truth on the right hand and on the left. *The priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.* It would be to the lasting honour of the Reformed Presbytery, to manifest their zeal for reformation, by purging out of their Testimony the old leaven of false accusations against men, and their false glosses on several parts of the word of God.—By expunging that part of their Testimony respecting civil government, which is near the half of it.—And by professing subjection to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

## S E C T. VI.

*Disloyalty to the just and legal Authority of Princes,  
Rebellion against GOD, and very Hurtful to the  
Religion of JESUS CHRIST.*

**H**ATH the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken than the fat of rams: For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry, 2 Sam. xv. 22, 23. Kings are God's vicegerents on earth, and therefore have a right to be obeyed in all things, which do not interfere with the commands of God. They are the representatives of the power and majesty of the Almighty Sovereign of the world, and therefore are called Gods. Now, as disobedience to the king's viceroy is a despising the authority of the king himself; so to refuse subjection to the just authority of princes, is to rebel against the sovereign authority of the universal Ruler: *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God,* Rom. xiii. 2. God hath written the



the marks of his sore displeasure on the sin of despising dominion, and speaking evil of dignities. Miriam spake against Moses, who was king in Jeshurun, and behold, she became leprous, white as snow, and as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed: *Because, the venom of her lungs, says one, would have eaten into the reputation of her brother; therefore a poisonous infection eats into her flesh.* The opening earth was at once an executioner, and a grave to rebellious Korah and his company. An oak in the wood of Ephraim was a gallows to rebellious Absalom; and thousands of his treacherous followers fell by the sword of vengeance.—These marks of the divine displeasure are recorded for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come; and they plainly shew, that he who contemns the lawful authority of his prince, by word or deed, stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty. He runneth upon him him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers. Therefore let us beware of reviling the gods, and of cursing the ruler of our people. *Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.*

Disloyalty is hurtful to our *holy religion*, for hereby we expose it to the hatred of princes, and arm their power against it. If the present civil powers, provoked by disloyal principles and practices, should draw the sword against us, we will have ourselves to blame, who first began the quarrel. One hath justly observed, that if men would consult the devil himself, what course they should take to blast the honour of religion, that malicious and malignant spirit could not direct them to a more effectual method, than to turn rebels to government from a pretence of piety.

In the apostolic age the enemies of Christianity could find no such effectual calumny to sink the credit, and expose the religion of Jesus to the fury of persecutors, than this, That it was an enemy to civil government. Therefore, if we make our holy religion an argument for refusing obedience to the lawful commands of the powers that be, we join hands with its avowed adversaries; we justify their most malicious calumnies against it; and we confess it to be guilty of the most infamous thing that ever it was charged with, by the worst of its enemies, viz. That it lays trains of disloyal principles in the hearts of men, on purpose to blast the authority, and blow up the thrones of princes. Therefore, if Christians would not revive the ancient and hellish calumny against the city of our God, that if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom.—That this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces. If they would not bring a reproach on the religion of their blessed Master, as if it taught men to despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities; and if they would not open the mouths of adversaries to blaspheme that

that worthy Name, by the which they are called, let them hear, not what this and the other master in Israel says, nor what this and the other act of Parliament says, but what the *Spirit saith unto the churches*. And the Spirit saith unto the churches, *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers ; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God*, Rom. xiii. 1. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake ; whether it be to the king, as supreme ; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King*, 1 Pet. xiii. 7. *I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men : for kings and for all that are in authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour*, 1 Tim. i. 3.

## S E C T. VII.

### *A Summary of the Arguments for Loyalty, drawn from Scripture Precepts and Examples.*

**T**O civil pow'rs, let great regard be giv'n ;  
 And human laws, that cross not those of heav'n.  
 For so do sacred oracles direct,  
 To higher pow'rs let ev'ry soul subject.  
 Saints, even in Rome, were taught, in lawful things,  
 Meekly t' obtemperate their heathen kings.  
 The precept reaches all the human clan,  
 Submit to ev'ry ordinance of man.  
 And that for reasons which apostles take  
 From heav'n and earth, even God and conscience sake.  
 While magistratic pow'rs don't tyrannize,  
 But grant their sacred, civil liberties,  
 Reclaimers in that case complain of ease:  
 Their name is such, as few will dare applaud,  
 Resisters of the ordinance of God.  
 Apostles orders all their flocks, and ours,  
 For heav'nly ends, to stoop to earthly pow'rs :  
 Nor for their want of qualities divine,  
 Must we their just authority decline.  
 And hence the prophet Jeremy implor'd  
 King Zedekiah as his royal Lord ;

Who



Who yet had broke his oath to Babylon,  
 And to idolatry aside had gone.  
 Hence also Obadiah, good and great,  
 Was wicked Ahahab's minister of state :  
 Yet in his service sacred lines record,  
 That Obadiah greatly fear'd the Lord.  
 Elijah too, that holy, zealous man,  
 Who ne'er on Ahab, in his sins, would fawn,  
 Yet, most submissive, before his chariot ran.

The sacred book with special folly loads,  
 All such as venture to revile the Gods.  
 For (but except sons of tyrannic thrall)  
 The God of heaven does rulers of the ball,  
 His viceroys and anointed servants call.  
 Hence Paul to Cæsar his appeal display'd :  
 And Christ to Cæsar will have tribute paid.

Yea, heav'n for earthly rulers pray'r exacts,  
 As much as they do tribute, toll or tax.  
 And hence, 'tis God's command to pray, we see,  
 For all invested with authority ;  
 That under them we peaceful lives may lead,  
 And godliness, and honesty succeed.  
 This precept, if we view the time, relates  
 To Pagan persecuting magistrates :  
 For none but such possess the ruling throne,  
 Till centuries of Christian years were gone.  
 Don't sov'reigns, then, much more our prayers claim,  
 That bear the Christian Protestant's fair name ?  
 In ancient times the man of God, 'tis said,  
 For sinful Jeroboam earnest pray'd.  
 Moses, for wicked Pharaoh lift his eyes ;  
 And faithful Abram, for Abim'lech cries.  
 Hence holy martyrs, in their dying hours,  
 Pray'd for their bloody persecuting pow'rs.  
 And holiest Jesus spent his dying breath  
 In prayer for cruel actors in his death.  
 And bids his follow'rs pray to heav'n for those  
 That are their spiteful persecuting foes.  
 Thus with his great example and command,  
 These precepts all in Judah binding stand ;  
 Yet Judah was a covenanted land. \*

\* See Mr. Ralph Erskine's Works, vol. II. page 787. folio. where the Scripture proofs are quoted, and extended at full length.

## C O N C L U S I O N.

**I**F we may believe the Holy Spirit, when he speaketh expressly, the cause defended in the preceeding pages is the cause of God; and therefore to testify against it, as the Reformed Presbytery has done, in opposition to the plainest divine precepts, is to crucify these precepts, and to put them to open shame. *Princes, said a weeping prophet, were hanged up by their hand; and the faces of elders were not honoured.* This treatment of princes and elders was matter of lamentation; but it is matter of far deeper sorrow, that some of the plainest precepts of the law of Christ are held up to the derision of Infidels, by explaining away their obvious meaning, and by imposing upon them the most absurd and ridiculous sense. If our head were waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears, we could not sufficiently deplore this wound given to the holy Oracles in the house of their friends. I have no ill will at the people called *Old Dissenters*; nay, I heartily wish, that their ministers may have all prosperity in preaching the gospel of peace. But I cannot wish well to their principles about civil government, unless I would shut the eye of common sense against the noon-day light of divine revelation; and unless I would set aside, as useless, the approved practice of prophets, and apostles, and the blessed example of the Lord Jesus; and therefore, tho' the Reformed Presbytery, and their followers, will not think it a compliment, yet I cordially wish, that the fire of their misplaced, though well-meant zeal, about civil government, may be extinguished; that the vail of prejudice may be removed from their minds, when they read Moses, and the prophets; and that they may return to *the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*

If the Lord shall be pleased to bless these few sheets, for preventing opposition to the truth as it is in Jesus, and for confirming any in the faith of the scripture doctrine of obedience to the lawful commands of *the powers that be*, the labour of the writer will not be in vain in the Lord.

*END of the SCRIPTURE-LOYALIST.*



## A P P E N D I X,

CONTAINING

An ANSWER to One Hundred QUESTIONS,

Proposed to SECEDERS, in a Printed LETTER,

By ANDREW NEWTON, *Merchant* in DUNSE.

THE most part of the following questions hath no respect at all to the present controversy, as the intelligent reader will easily perceive. The scope of many of them is, to palm principles upon Seceders, which they positively deny. Thus for example, it is insinuated, in the question about the Law of Nature, that "Seceders prefer the Law of Nature to divine revelation, making the one an unalterable, eternal standard of morality, and the other a violable mutable kind of thing:" as Mr. Thorburn saith, in his *Vindiciæ*, p. 21. A variety of false accusations are brought against Seceders in the following questions, and many of them not in plain terms, but by sly insinuations. The design of answering the following Queries, is to wipe off the dust thrown upon the principles of Seceders, and to prevent the world from being imposed upon by false, and unfair representations of things.

And I shall endeavour to answer them, not by dark innuendoes, and insidious insinuations, but in words easy to be understood.

"*Quest. 1.* Is the Law of Nature the same with the Moral Law of God?"

*Ans.* If we view the Law of Nature as in innocent Adam, it is materially the same with the Law of the Ten Commandments; but if we consider it as in fallen man, there is a vast difference between the small remains of it in him, and the fair and complete copy of it in innocent Adam.

"*Q. 2.* If you deny the Law of Nature to be the same with the Moral Law, it is demanded, What is the Law of Nature, and where is it to be found?"

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*A.* It is granted, as above said, that the Law of Nature, as in innocent Adam, is materially the same with the Law of the Ten Commandments. But it is demanded, What is the Law of Nature? “*A.* It is that necessary unalterable rule of right and “ wrong, founded in the infinitely holy and just nature of God, “ and whereunto men, as reasonable creatures, cannot but be indif- “ pensibly bound, Rom. ii. 14, 15.” *Synod’s Catech.* Part 2. p. 9.

It is further demanded, Where is the Law of Nature to be found? *A.* The general principles of it, such as, that there is a God, and that he is to be worshipped, are to be found among the Heathen: A copy of it, perfect in parts, but not in degrees, is written in the heart of every believer, by the finger of God. If a man is a saint indeed, the Law of his God is in his heart, And a perfect copy of the law of Nature is to be found in the Old and New Testament, and in the hearts of the saints triumphant.

“*Q. 3.* Is not the Law of Nature amongst Heathens, and amongst Christians, the same unchangeable Law, with this difference, that it is dark and unrevealed to Heathens, but clearly revealed to Christians?”

*A.* That the Law of Nature is clearly revealed to Christians is true, and that it is dark to Heathens is not denied. But it is utterly false, that the Law of Nature is “unrevealed to Heathens.” If this was the case with Heathens, they could no more be the subjects of God’s moral government, than the flocks, and herds. The Law of Nature is not revealed to them in the written Word, but it is graven on their hearts by the Author of their being, Rom. ii. 14. “—These having not the Law, *i. e.* the written Law, are a Law unto themselves: which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts.”

“*Q. 4.* Is there not a real difference betwixt the Law of Nature, and that light, reason, or eye of the soul, that beholds, and discovers the Law of Nature?”

*A.* There is such a difference between the Law of Nature, and the light of reason, as there is between the eye of the body, and the object which it beholds.

“*Q. 5.* Is not the Law of Nature opened up and fully illustrated in the word of God, the Old and New Testament?”

*A.* The Law of Nature is fully opened up in the word of God, and the way of salvation through the blood of Christ is opened up in it, which the Law of Nature knows nothing of.

“*Q. 6.* Has not God, of his great mercy, given his word and ordinances, laws and statutes, to Christians under the New Testament, as well as to the Jews under the Old Testament, to be a complete rule of faith and practice?”

*A.* The word of God is a complete rule of faith and practice to.



to the New Testament Church; and Seceders never said any thing to the contrary.

“ Q. 7. Has not God commanded Christians to pay a conscientious regard to all his precepts, and to keep pure and entire all his ordinances?”

A. It is the duty of Christians, to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless; but it is a melancholy truth, that the old Dissenters, as well as Seceders, in many things offend all. I know no precepts, and ordinances of Christ, which are not kept as pure and entire among Seceders, as among Old Dissenters. And as to a conscientious regard to divine precepts and ordinances, none else is judge but God.

“ Q. 8. Is there any command or precept given by God in the Old Testament, calculated to bring glory to himself, honour to the divine Law, and good to his Church, abrogated under the New Testament?”

A. Mr. Newton would not have asked this question, if he had considered, that meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, were imposed until the time of reformation. All the precepts of the Ceremonial Law had a fitness to bring glory to God, and good to his Church, under the Old Testament; but being abrogated by the death of Christ, they have no such fitness, under the New Testament. Would the Old Dissenters have Seceders, to turn again to the weak and beggarly elements of the Ceremonial Law?

“ Q. 9. Is not Civil Government a divine ordinance, instituted and appointed by God in his word?”

A. Magistracy is an ordinance instituted by God, as Creator, in the Law of Nature: and this ordinance is fully and clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures. “ That Magistracy is the ordinance of God, is, I think, confessed by all; that this ordinance proceeds from God as Creator and moral Governor of the world, few have ever denied, except the Papists, and Anabaptists in Germany.—If it flows from God in these characters, then its institution must be in the Law of Nature; this being the only Law, which proceeds from him as Creator, &c. and it must be common to all men, they being equally his by creation, and as the subjects of his moral government.”\*

“ Q. 10. Are there no rules given by God in the Old Testament, respecting Civil Government, to be regarded by Christians under the New Testament?”

A. Seceders have not rejected the Old Testament as a rule respecting Civil Government. But I cannot help thinking, that the Reformed Presbytery has rejected some very plain precepts,

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in

\* Presbyterian Covenanter, p. 9.

in the New Testament, respecting Civil Government. Their senseless comment on the first seven verses of the xiii<sup>th</sup>. chapter of the Romans, and of other similar passages, is equal to a blotting them out of the book of God.

“Q. 11. Are not the qualifications of Magistrates as clearly revealed, and fully required in the word of God, as the qualifications of Ministers?”

A. A quotation from Mr. Thorburn's *Vindiciæ*, as an answer to this question, will be very acceptable to Mr. Newton. He says, p. 167, “It has been already demonstrated at great length, that the Scripture requires no other qualifications, as essential to the Magistrate, than what are required in the original Law of Nature,” &c.

“Q. 12. Is not civil government, and are not righteous judges, a promised blessing in the Old Testament, given to, and to be accomplished in the New Testament Church?”

A. Seceders believe, that all the promises of the Old Testament will be accomplished in their season: and that when the glory of the latter days is come, greater numbers of Gentiles will come to the light of Christ, and kings to the brightness of his rising.

“Q. 13. Are not godly Magistrates in scripture called a blessing to a church and nation; when, on the contrary, wicked Magistrates are a curse to both?”

A. I dare not call the British Magistrates a curse both to the church and nation, because, under them, we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty: and because God hath said, “Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor speak evil of the ruler of thy people.”

“Q. 14. Are the throne of iniquity, and the throne of righteousness, both thrones of the Lord, according to his preceptive will?”

A. The absurdity of distinguishing Magistrates, into preceptive, and providential, hath been shewed already. The worst, as well as the best, of princes, reign by the sovereign will of God, as the Creator, and Governor of the universe, Dan iv. 17. *The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.*

“Q. 15. Are the instruments of God's providence in civil power, which are called in scripture his *ax*, *hammer*, and *rod*, *foxes*, *lions*, and *devils*, as agreeable and correspondent to his preceptive will, as those rulers who are ministers of his ordinance, just men, fearing God, and hating covetousness?”

A. This question is the same in substance with the preceding; and the answer there given, is a sufficient reply unto it. Only I would observe here, that Mr. Newton is guilty of a railing accusation, if he insinuates, that the British Magistrates are God's *ax*, *hammer*,



hammer, and rod, to break in pieces their subjects; and that they are like foxes, lions, and devils, going about, and seeking whom they may devour. *Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee, Jude 9.*

“Q 16. Is not God offended and provoked, when his professing people set up rulers, but not by him, acting in a way contrary to his law and will revealed in his word?”

A. It is very true, that God is offended, when Christians acknowledge him not, and observe not his law in the choice of their Magistrates. And it is as true, that God is offended, when the strictest professors of Christianity go about, sowing the tares of disloyalty, and refusing subjection to the just and lawful authority of their Christian Magistrates.

“Q 17. Have a Christian people a power to model Civil Government, and to elect and set up Civil Governors, in contradiction to the command and will of God in his word?”

A. It is very sinful and dangerous to set up Magistrates in contradiction to the command of God. And it is no less sinful and dangerous, to refuse subjection to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. “The powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.”

“Q 18. Is every power that is exalted by adorable providence, a moral power, ordained of God for the end of his glory, and the good of a Christian church and nation?”

A. God hath for his own glory fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass. And wicked men, exalted to regal authority, will promote the glory of God: Howbeit, they mean not so, neither do their hearts think so. The wrath of man shall praise the Lord: the remainder of wrath shall he restrain. And as to the good of a Christian church and nation, We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. Seceders never taught, as this question craftily supposes, that vicious rulers are as fit instruments, for promoting the glory of God, and the good of Christians, as virtuous rulers are. The querist was once a Seceder, and knows very well, that no such doctrine was ever taught in the Secession.

“Q 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. Is not the Christian Magistrate commanded by God to be keepers of both tables of the Moral Law? Is it persecution for the Christian Magistrate to execute the law of God upon those who break the first table of the law of God, in an open and heinous manner? Is it not an essential qualification in the Christian Magistrate that he be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well? Has the Christian Magistrate a right to tolerate

tolerate error and heresy in principle, or immorality in practice? Is no more required of the Christian Magistrate, in point of duty and obligation, than is required of the Heathen Magistrate, who has not the law revealed?

*A.* These few short hints are a sufficient reply to these questions.

1. All of them have a respect to the power of the Christian Magistrate about church matters, but no respect at all to the present controversy. 2. Seceders allow the Christian Magistrate all that power about church matters, which the word of God allows him, but no more. 3. Tho' Seceders are no friends to a boundless toleration, yet they cannot see a warrant in the word of God, for making the Christian Magistrate the church's hangman, or a rod of iron to break in pieces every Dissenter from a legal establishment of religion.

"Q. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. Is it the duty of a Christian people to assent and consent to the deed of the *primores regni*, in setting up rulers who have not the qualifications the word of God requires? Are a Christian people bound by the law of God, to honour and obey all rulers who are exalted by providence, and, in their administration, rule to the hurt and injury of a nation, or Church of Christ therein? Is it not absolutely necessary, that there be lawful authority, according to the rule of God's word, before there can be lawful civil commands, binding a Christian people to obedience for conscience sake, and for fear of wrath? Is not moral virtue required to the performance of the Christian Magistrate's work and office? And must there not be moral ability, to constitute moral authority? Are manifest idolaters, and notorious habitual transgressors of the holy law of God, worthy to bear rule and government over a Christian professing people?"

*A.* Let the following things be considered, as a reply to these queries. 1. Every one of them has a respect to the qualifications of the Christian Magistrate; and it is granted, That Christians should provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers. 3. Moral ability, that is, scriptural qualifications, is not necessary to constitute moral authority. However small the scriptural qualifications of parents be, yet they have moral authority over their children; and it is the duty of children, to obey their fathers according to the flesh, even tho' they should be the basest of men. And however small the scriptural qualifications of masters may be, yet they have moral authority over their servants; and it is the duty of servants, to be subject to their masters, with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. If moral ability was essentially necessary to constitute moral authority, there could be no authority in the Heathen, and very little in the Christian world. 3. The Heathen Roman emperors were exalted by



by providence, they ruled to the hurt of Christianity, they were manifest idolaters, and yet the law of Christ bound the church at Rome, and other churches, in the Roman empire, to obedience for conscience sake, and for fear of wrath. Rom. xiii. 1. *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. Ver. 5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

“Q. 29. Do you believe there was a Reformation in Britain and Ireland the last century, both in Church and State?”

A. There was a Reformation last century: But with the most part it was a Reformation in word, and in tongue, but not in deed, and in truth, as appeared by the general apostacy which followed. And if by a State Reformation is meant, the Reformation of Charles I. & II. we believe, that they never were reformed; and that many, if not the generality of inferior Magistrates, were enemies to Christ in their hearts, and by wicked works.

“Q. 30. Can a nation be said to be reformed, or called a holy nation, without a State Reformation?”

A. This question supposes, that Seceders judge a State Reformation needless, and that they are not contending for it. As no proof is brought to support the accusation, a denial of it is a sufficient reply to the insidious query.

“Q. 32. Were not the Covenants National and Solemn League the door of admission to all places of civil power and trust in that period of reformation?”

A. The Heathen Roman emperors entered not into places of civil power, by the door of religious covenanting, and yet Paul commanded the Christians in his day, to be subject to them, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

“Q. 33. Were not enemies to the Protestant Presbyterian religion of Jesus Christ excluded from all places of civil power and trust in that period of reformation?”

A. Seceders never taught, as this question uncharitably supposes, that enemies to the Christian religion should not be excluded from places of civil power and trust. Our Reformers did well in excluding all such, as would break down, what they had built up.

“Q. 34. Does not our solemn Covenants bind Covenanters to be loyal to civil authority, in the defence of the true religion; but not in the destruction of the true religion?”

A. The British Magistrates are not destroyers of the true religion, as the query falsely insinuates. The querist knows, that some of them are men fearing God, and hating covetousness; and that the worst of them do not hinder their subjects to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

“Q. 35. Did our Reformers solemnly swear in these Covenants, to extirpate Popery and Prelacy; and were they, at the same time,

time, willing that Papists and Prelatists in principle should sway the sceptre of civil power over them?"

A. Tho' our covenanting Reformers did not wish, that Papists and Prelatists should rule over them, yet they taught, "That infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the Magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience." As a farther reply to this question, let the reader consult the answer to the seventh objection in the *Scripture Loyalist*.

"Q. 36. Do you think the introduction of Prelacy by Charles II. and his claiming a power that belongs to Christ as Head of his church, making it essential to his crown by the Act Explanatory; was a sufficient reason for our Reformers and Martyrs to reject his civil authority?"

A. It was the duty of our worthy Reformers, and is the duty of every Christian, rather to die, than to own any prince as the head of the Church of Christ. Seceders never taught, as this question supposes, that the late noble Martyrs in Scotland, died as a fool dieth. Let the reader look back to page 24th of the *Scripture-Loyalist*, and the note at the foot of it, and he will find a fuller reply to this question.

"Q. 37. Is not tyranny against God, his truth, cause and interest, a stronger reason for Christians to reject civil authority, than tyranny against the civil properties and natural rights of men?"

A. This question takes it for granted, that our civil rulers are tyrants against God, against his truth, against his cause and interest, which I cannot help thinking to be a railing accusation. Tyrants dispose of the lives, and of the properties of their subjects as they please, but the British Magistracy hath not done so for a century past, even the Reformed Brethren themselves being judges.

"Q. 38. Did not the Martyrs, after the king's supremacy was explained to be essential to the crown, not only reject his civil authority, but also refuse to purchase their lives, at the expence of praying for him as king?"

A. The Martyrs did well, in not praying for the king as the head of the church. When obedience to the authority of princes would be a transgression of the royal law of heaven, we must obey God, rather than men.

"Q. 39. Is it lawful to pray for a king, as such, that he may be blessed and successful in his reign and government, when a part of that government is employed in robbing the Son of God of his crown-rights, as king and head of his church; and in giving defence and protection to Popery, Prelacy, and all heresy?"

A. Take the following things as an answer to this question.

1. "We



1. "We should pray for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter, but not for the dead, nor for those that are known to have sinned the sin unto death." *Larger Catech. Q. 183.* 2. It is a notorious falsehood, "That a part of the British Government is employed in robbing the Son of God of his crown-rights as King and Head of his church. The act of supremacy was rescinded at the happy Revolution as was formerly observed." 3. The answer to the eighth objection in the *Scripture-Loyalist*, is a sufficient reply to the last part of this question; and to it the reader is referred.

"Q. 40. Can a person pray for a king as such, and only intend his civil headship over the nation, and exclude his spiritual headship over the church, which is included in the essence of his crown and Constitution, and be guilty of no dissimulation, no Jesuitism, in the sight of a holy God?"

A. The British king hath had no other, than civil headship over this nation, since the Revolution. The catechist has been very scarce of, dull to cast in the face of the best king in Europe, when he raked up the ashes of the supremacy from its grave, where it hath lien for an hundred years.

"Q. 41. Was not the Revolution-settlement, both in State and Church, a destroying, overturning, and burying a covenanted work of reformation?"

A. A covenanted work of reformation, which had lien buried under the heavy grave-stone of persecution twenty-eight years, was raised up again at the Revolution, not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts. The house of God, which had been shut up as in the reign of wicked Ahaz, was opened. The gospel of the blessed God, which had been bound and imprisoned, was released, had a free course, and was glorified. Seceders dare not join with the Reformed Brethren, in blaspheming the remarkable deliverance sent from heaven to the nation, on the 5th day of November, 1688. they dare not vilify that memorable day, as a day of small things. In that day, the Lord brake the yoke of our burden, and the staff of our shoulder. the rod of our oppressor, as in the day of Midian. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the Heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us: whereof we are glad.

"Q. 42. Is not the State and Church, at this day, in a worse situation, more backslidden and apostatized, then they were even at the Revolution-settlement?"

A. Whatever evils might be in the settlement of religion at the Revolution, these are not the causes of apostacy. An evil heart of

unbelief is the source of apostacy. Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed. The best settlement of religion cannot reform the hearts and lives of men. How soon did the generality of the nation fall into the mire of apostacy, after the remarkable settlement of religion, in the year 1638! How soon did the gold become dim, how soon was the most fine gold changed!

"Q. 43. Are they not the best friends to Christ, and their country, who desire every wicked unhallowed deed of constitution, in Church and State, to be razed, rooted up, and overturned?"

A. Charity, which thinketh no evil, will easily grant, that Seceders are as great enemies to wicked deeds of constitution, in Church and State, as the Reformed Brethren are.

"Q. 44. Are they not enemies to Christ and their country, who wish the present constitution, in State and Church, to remain inviolable to future ages?"

A. We wish, that the good things in the present constitutions may remain to future ages, and that the evil things may be reformed.

"Q. 45. Is not the public declarative glory of God in the world, more worthy to be esteemed and regarded by a Christian, than his own salvation?"

A. Whether Seceders, or the Reformed Brethren, have most regard to the glory of God, is left to the determination of God, the Judge of all.

"Q. 46. Are not those who reject the counsel and command of God in the Scriptures, with respect to Civil Government and Governors, justly chargeable with Deism?"

A. This question supposes, that Seceders have rejected the Holy Scriptures, with respect to Civil Government and Governors. The supposition is groundless, and uncharitable: the interrogator knows, that it is a vile slander. It is bad to take up, but much worse to make a reproach against our neighbour. The ridiculous sense of Rom. xiii. 1. and other similar passages, adopted by the Reformed Brethren, is a branch of Deism with a witness.

"Q. 47. Is it the duty of Christians, in this day, to hold fast, contend for, and maintain the truths attained in the former period of reformation, at the expence of much blood and treasure, both in respect of the civil and religious part of that glorious Reformation?"

A. I know no truths, respecting the civil, and religious part of the glorious Reformation, for which Seceders have not been as zealous, as the Old Dissenters.

"Q. 48. Are not the arguments, which Seceders use against Dissenters, the same in substance with those arguments used by the persecutors against the martyrs?"

A. The weapon, which Seceders use against Dissenters, is the sword



Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. This weapon is not the worse for Seceders, that the devil used it against our Lord in the wilderness, and that it hath been often used by the children of the devil for the worst of purposes.

"Q. 49, 50, 51, 52. Is it not a contradiction, to pray to the Lord to revive his Covenanted Work of Reformation, and then to pray for success and a blessing to \* a King and Government, which, your Synod says, is a bar, thrust in the way, and a grave-stone lying on that same Reformation? Is it not a contradiction, to pray that the Lord would bless both Houses of Parliament, and lead them to proper measures for the honour of Christ, when a part of these Houses are Bishops, sworn to profess and maintain English Popish ceremonies, abjured by the Oath of our solemn Covenants? On what Scripture-promise do Seceders build that prayer, that the Lord would bless an Erastian Government, as the present is, which, the Synod say, neither they, nor others under it, can prosper in their civil concerns, nor be enriched with the blessings of the Gospel?  
Is

\* "A king and government, which, your Synod says, is a bar thrust in the way, and a grave-stone lying on that same reformation," is a saying, not of the Associate Synod, but of the querist. The Associate Presbytery, having mentioned several evils, in the settlement of religion at the Revolution, say, in their Answers to Mr Nairn's Reasons of Dissent, p. 51. "Upon the whole, it appears, that, under the present constitution, a mighty bar is thrust into the way of our covenanted reformation, both in church and state; yea, a grave-stone is laid, and established upon the same." Mr Newton hath metamorphosed, and compelled this saying to speak a sense, which the Associate Presbytery never intended. The Presbytery complains of the evils in the present constitution, as a bar thrust in the way of our covenanted reformation; but Mr Newton hath changed "present constitution" into "a king and government." The Presbytery speaks of a constitution, in which they judge several things to be faulty, but the unfair, and fraudulent change of their words, makes them to speak of the present civil rulers. The Presbytery had as much common sense, as to distinguish between faults in the constitution, and faults in the magistrate: and they knew very well, that whatever bar is thrust in the way of a general reformation, in Church and State, by the present constitution, yet the administration of the British magistrates is no bar in the way of reformation, in several other respects. The king, as supreme, and inferior magistrates, hinder none of their subjects, to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. They hinder none of their Popish subjects, to become Protestants. They hinder none of their Episcopalian subjects, to become Presbyterians. They hinder none of their Presbyterian subjects, to renew the National, and Solemn League and Covenant, in so far as it is competent for them to do so. They hinder none of their subjects, to testify against the evils in the constitution of Church and State. They hinder none to testify against their acts of male-administration: and so far as I know, none of their subjects are debarred from asking a redress of grievances. They do not hinder the Reformed Presbytery, and their followers, to disown their authority, and from press and pulpit, to give them the most odious names.

Is it lawful and equal to pray, the Lord to bring down Popery and Prelacy; and next breath to pray, that the Lord may preserve and prosper that Government, which is a defence of Popery, and the head support and bulwark of Prelacy?"

*A.* If our civil rulers were much worse, than these questions suppose them to be, yet the command of Christ obliges us to pray for them; and if Mr Newton pleases, he may call this command, an argument used by the persecutors against the martyrs. *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you, Mat v. 44. I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings and for all that are in authority,— 1 Tim i. 3* Let the reader look back to the 5th *Objection* in the *Scripture-Loyalist*, and the answer to it, and he will find a larger reply to these questions about praying for civil rulers.

"Q 53. Is it not a contradiction, to make the English Prelatical hierarchy, one of our national sins and steps of defection, as Seceders do; and yet to own and approve of the constitutions of those Parliaments in England and Ireland, which establish and support that hierarchy?"

*A.* Seceders have as much common sense, as to distinguish between the good, and the bad things in the constitution. So far as they know the good things in the constitution, they wish to be thankful for them; and so far as they know the evil things in it, they reckon them national sins, and pray for the reformation of them.

"Q 54. Does Christ intercede in heaven for success to his enemies, in their stated opposition to his interest, kingdom and glory?"

*A.* Passing the gross impropriety of mentioning the intercession of Christ here, we observe, that the question imports two things: 1. That the British magistrates are stated enemies to the kingdom of Christ. 2. That Seceders pray, or intercede with God, for success to them in their stated opposition to the kingdom of Christ. Both these are fruits of a slandering tongue, and a denial of them will suffice, for a reply to the query.

"Q 55. Is it possible to maintain the perpetual binding obligation of the Covenants, and, at the same time, maintain the lawfulness of a Prelatical Government, abjured in these Covenants?"

*A.* Seceders never maintained the lawfulness of Prelacy in Church or State; and so it is very possible for them, to maintain the perpetual binding obligation of the Covenants.

"Q 56,—68. Is it honest and faithful work, to swear a Bond differing in form and substance from our solemn Covenants, and cause the people believe it contains the *all* of our Covenants? Is it consistent to say, as Seceders do, that the Covenants are morally bind-



binding upon posterity; and yet to say, the compilers and makers of these Covenants were faulty, in blending civil and ecclesiastic matters in the Oath of the Covenants? Is it honest dealing in Seceders, to keep out of their Bond, that obligation in the Solemn League, viz. *Against our common enemies*: Also, that obligation to endeavour to bring the Churches in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Church Government, Directory for Worship, and Catechising? Is it honesty to keep out of your Seceding Bond these words in the Solemn League, viz. "Without respect of persons, endeavour the extirpation of Prelacy;" and substitute in the room thereof, these words, viz. *Testify against Popery and Prelacy*? Is it honesty to keep out of your Bond the third and fourth articles in the Solemn League; and yet say, they are morally binding? Is it honesty to keep out of your Seceding Bond, these words in the fifth article in the Solemn League, viz. "That justice may be done on the wilful opposers thereof in manner expressed in the preceding article:" and almost the whole of the sixth article, together with a material paragraph in the conclusion of the Solemn League? Was not the Seceders Bond, a burying a Covenanted Reformation, in as much as they pass by the National Covenants, as renewed in the year 1638; and the Solemn League and Covenant, as renewed in the year 1648, without the Acknowledgement of Sins, and Engagement to Duties; and go back to the years 1588, and 1581, as the model of their covenanting? Did our ancestors, who renewed the National Covenant by a Bond, in the year 1638, mutilate and cut off the substance of the National Covenant, as Seceders have done, in cutting off a very great part of the substance of both National and Solemn League, in the making of their new Bond? What is the reason Seceders in their new Bond have not given the king's majesty a place in it, seeing they call the present Government a lawful preceptive Government? Has Government no reason to suspect and call in question the loyalty of Seceders, seeing they have excluded his Majesty, and his interest, out of their Covenant, which was not the practice of honest, loyal Covenanters in the former period? If you say, that it would be a blending of civil and religious matters in the oath of the Covenant; I ask, if there is no blending of civil and religious matters in the Moral Law, in the Bible, and in the sermons and prayers of Seceders, and how they are not rejected for the same reason? Do different times and circumstances alter the nature of sin and duty, truth and error, so as that we may change the nature and substance of Covenants, which we call morally binding to the latest posterity? When Seceders cut, mangle, and hew the nature and substance of solemn covenants, throwing away the one half, and keeping the other; is there

there no danger of incurring the penalty due to covenant-breakers, when they shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, and have the secrets of their hearts disclosed?"

*A.* Every intelligent reader will easily see, that these Thirteen Questions have not the smallest respect to the matter in dispute. Supposing but not granting, that the way of covenanting among Seceders is wrong, yet it militates nothing against their principles about Civil Government. Mr Newton may as well conclude from the faults of professors, that the Christian religion is a cunningly devised fable. Seceders have kept out of their Bond some passages of the National, and of the Solemn League and Covenant, and from this the querist infers, that they are dishonest, and have buried a Covenanted Reformation; that they are disloyal to Government, and covenant-breakers. His reasoning against Seceders would have been just as conclusive, if he had said, they have rejected the whole Bible, because they have not taken it into their Bond. The sum of religious covenanting is this: An avouching the Lord to be our God; and, in his strength, to walk in all his commandments and ordinances blameless. According to this view of covenanting, Seceders have taken the king's interest into their Bond, and the interest of every man, with whom they are connected, by the ties of nature, of gratitude, or of grace.

"Q 69. What is the reason that in your Act and Testimony you testify so fully against the corruptions and defections of the Revolution Church, and are so partial in testifying against the Revolution State, seeing you call yourselves witnesses for the whole of the Covenanted Reformation, which was not only a Church, but also a State Reformation?"

*A.* Supposing, but not granting, that the Testimony of Seceders is partial, yet this partiality is no proof, that their principles about Civil Government are antisciptural.

"Q 70. Do you think that the Act of Classes in the former period, excluding men disaffected, and enemies to a Covenanted Reformation, from all places of power and trust, was a bad Act, and should never again be put in practice?"

*A.* This is materially the same with the 33d Question, which was formerly answered. Seceders never taught, as this question insinuates, that enemies to a Covenanted Reformation should have places of power and trust?"

"Q 71, 72. Did you secede from the Revolution Church? Or did you only secede from a corrupt party in that Church, on account of some defections following the Revolution settlement? Is it just and equal to secede from the Revolution Church, and cleave to the Revolution State, when, in the Acts to the National Covenant, and experience has proven, that the authority of the State, and the  
Worship



Worship of the House of God, have common friends and common enemies, and both stand and fall together?"

*A.* Seceders are blamed here for seceding from the Revolution Church, and for cleaving to the Revolution State. And what precept of the divine Law have they broken in doing so? Is a secession from the State necessarily connected with a secession from the Church? No indeed. As we formerly observed, when any of the Heathens in the Roman empire embraced the Christian religion, they dropt all religious connexion with the Pagan priests, and their idolatrous worship, and joined themselves to the Church of Christ; but they still continued to be dutiful subjects in the State. The Reformed Brethern are cleaving as much to the Revolution State, as Seceders are; that is, they are, in reality, as subject to the powers that be, as Seceders are, whatever they pretend to the contrary. They do not, and cannot, reduce to practice, one jot or tittle of their principles about civil government, except their refusing to pray for kings, and for all who are in authority.

"Q. 73, 74 Is the king, at present, a head or governor over the Churches in his dominions, having that power by the constitution? Is the robbing the Son of God of his crown-rights and royal prerogatives, and the Church of her rights and privileges, by civil powers, no just grounds for Christians to reject and disown their civil authority?"

*A.* An unmannerly, and abominable slander is brought against the king here. The British king hath no supremacy in the Church, neither by the constitution, nor by usurpation, as we have already shewed. I am sorry to find zealous professors, following the steps of them, who are presumptuous, and self-willed, who despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

"Q. 75 Is it faithfulness, or flattery, in professing witnesses for a Covenanted Reformation, to call such powers the best of kings, and of the mildest administration?"

*A.* If the present civil powers were not of the mildest administration, they would never allow a part of their subjects to pass with impunity, who revile them from the press, and load them with the odious characters of lions, foxes, devils, and of robbing the Son of God of his crown-rights and royal prerogatives. This treatment of civil rulers is not the fruit of the Spirit, which is in all goodness; but the fruit of a blind, and indiscreet zeal, a zeal like the fire of hell, which hath fervent heat but no light.

"Q. 76, 77 What way is it that the present Civil Government is politically maintaining and defending the Confession of Faith and Covenants, asserted in one of your prints on covenanting? How do you prove that the magistrate cannot hurt us in our religious rights, while they defend us in our civil rights, as asserted in the same print?"

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*A.* In the coronation-oath, "the king solemnly promises, and swears, that he will, to the utmost of his power, preserve the Protestant religion, and Presbyterian Church government in Scotland." This oath is a political defence of the Confession of Faith and Covenants. Whether the doctrine taught in a print on covenanting be true or false, that the defence of our civil, includes a defence of our religious rights, yet one thing is certain, that the present Civil Government is neither hurting us in our civil, nor in our religious privileges.

*Q. 78.* If the Christian magistrate has no power to enforce the profession of the true religion upon his subjects, as you say in another print: I ask, if he has any power to punish atheism, idolatry, blasphemy and Sabbath-breaking?"

*A.* Seceders allow the Christian magistrate all that power to punish vices, which the word of God allows him, and no more.

*Q. 79.* What is the reason Seceders will not swear the oaths in being, which are a *testament* of loyalty to the present rulers, when they call these rulers lawful, Scriptural, and the best of governments?"

*A.* As far as I know, Seceders have no scruple to swear a lawful oath to the present rulers, when they have a call. "A lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, ought to be taken. It is a sin, to refuse an oath touching any thing that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority." \*

*Q. 80.* If Scriptural qualifications are not essential to the being, but to the well-being and usefulness of the magistrate's office, as Seceders say; I ask, if the present magistrates have those qualifications, and are useful, or want them, and are useless?"

*A.* The authority of parents, and of masters, is magistracy in miniature; and if Scriptural qualifications were essential to the being of authority over children, and servants, there would be no paternal, nor magisterial authority, in the Heathen, and very little in the Christian world. The Reformed Presbytery will never be able to prove, that there is a specific difference between domestic, and magistratical authority. "The form, and state of government, hath been subject to change, and variation amongst all nations, but especially amongst the Jews, where these changes are observable. At first, the fathers of their several families, and their first-born after them, exercised all kind of government, both ecclesiastical, and civil, being both kings and priests, in their own houses. They had power over their own families, to bless, curse, call out of doors, disinherit, and to punish with death, as appears by these examples of Noah towards Ham, Gen ix. 25. of Abraham toward Hagar and Ishmael, Gen xxi. 10. of Jacob towards Simeon and Levi, Gen xlix. 3. and of Judah towards Tamar,

\* Confess. of Faith, chap. 22. sect. 2, 3.



“ Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 24. In the days of Moses, this prerogative of primogeniture ceased; and as Aaron and his posterity were invested with the right, and title of priests; so Moses, and after him Joshua, ruled all the people with a kind of monarchical authority.” \* It is true indeed, that, in our own, and in all civilized nations, the authority of magistrates is far more extensive, than the authority of parents, and masters; but it is as true, that, *majus, et minus, non variat speciem*; that is, a greater, or a less quantity of any thing, changes not the nature of it. A sixpence differs from a talent of silver, only in quantity. Domestic authority is the same in kind with the authority of the civil magistrate.

“ Q 81. Is it not a hard and paradoxical term of communion for Seceders to bind down ministers and private Christians, to be loyal to a government which, the Synod says, † has opposed, contradicted, and overthrown the glorious Reformation once established in this land?”

A. The word of God is a sufficient warrant for Seceders, to exclude from their communion all those, who despise government, and are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Our terms of communion are no more paradoxical, than these enjoined upon the Christians at Rome, by an inspired apostle. The magistrates, in Paul's day, were far worse, than our magistrates are, even the Reformed Brethren themselves being judges. They had put to death the Lord of life; they persecuted his followers; they were the supporters of superstition and idolatry, and the main obstacle in the way of the gospel. Paul bound down ministers and private Christians, to be loyal to this government. “ Let every soul be subject to the higher powers,” Rom. xiii. 1. Will the Reformed Presbytery say, that this divine injunction contains paradoxical terms of communion?

“ Q 82. Is it lawful to debar and excommunicate from the table of the Lord, all those that are not loyal to a Prelatic Erastian government?”

A. As an answer to this question, consider the following things. 1. It is lawful to debar from the table of the Lord, all those who will not submit themselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors,

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\* Godwayn's Moses and Aaron, p. 1, 1.

† The Associate Synod, in their Testimony, and the Associate Presbytery, in their Answers to Mr Nairn's Reasons of Dissent, have mentioned a variety of evils, in the settlement of religion at the Revolution: But it hath escaped my observation, if the Synod hath said, “ That the present Government hath opposed, contradicted, and overthrown the glorious Reformation once established in this land.” Seceders condemn, and desire to deplore the evils of our constitution; but, at the same time, they must acknowledge to the praise and glory of God, “ That such security is given, by the present civil Government, unto our religion, lives and liberties, as no other people now on earth enjoys the like.” Answers to Mr. Nairn's Reasons of Dissent, p. 50.

is unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. 2. The present civil government is not Erastian; that is, it hath no power by the constitution, nor by usurpation, to model the government of the Church, as it pleases, as we have already seen. Seceders are as inimical to Prelatic church-government, as the Reformed Brethren are; and as to a Prelatic civil government, they know no such government on the face of the earth. A Prelatic civil government is a solecism, a great impropriety of speech. Seceders have some notion of monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical civil government; but they know nothing of a Prelatic civil government: and they cannot see a warrant in the word of God to disown the authority of the king, because he is a member of the Church of England, the government of which is Episcopal.

Q. 83. If the present government be a lawful government, according to Scripture, what is the reason the \* nation cannot prosper under it, nor be enriched with the blessings of the gospel, as the Synod asserts? I would gladly know how a Scriptural government has these four grapes growing upon it?"

A. If we may believe the catechist, Seceders are very unfriendly to the government. "The Synod has asserted, that the nation cannot prosper under it, nor be enriched with the blessings of the gospel." But supposing the Synod to have said, that the nation cannot prosper under the present government, the Reformed Brethren have no reason to be angry at this saying, for a speaking evil of government seems to be a favourite article in their own creed. Mr Newton would gladly know how a Scriptural government

\* "The nation cannot prosper under it, nor be enriched with the blessings of the Gospel," is not the saying of the Associate Synod, concerning the present Government, so far as I am acquainted with their sayings. The Associate Presbytery, in their Answers to Mr Nairn's Reasons of Protest, have said, p. 46 "It is peculiarly incumbent upon every Civil State, whereinto Christianity is introduced, to study, and bring to pass, that Civil Government among them,—run in an agreeableness to the word of God,—as otherwise they cannot truly prosper in their civil concerns, nor be enriched by the blessings of the Gospel." The Presbytery hath taught here, that it is the duty of Christians, to walk by the word of God as their rule, in the erection of Civil Government among them, and that it is dangerous to do otherwise; but they do not say, "The nation cannot prosper under the present Government, nor be enriched with the blessings of the Gospel." Equity and Christian candour require, that the words of an antagonist, when brought as arguments against him, be fairly quoted, and the page pointed out where they are to be found. Mr Newton, as a writer, has manifested no measure of this Christian candour, in his queries. He frequently says, The Synod hath said this, and that, and the other thing; but his reader is left to find out where such and such things are said, in the best way he can; and when they are found, and examined, they appear to be spurious brats, laid down at the door of the Synod, and the interrogator himself is found to be their true father. It is unfair, and unmanly, to curtail, mangle and misrepresent, the words of an opponent; it is a mark of cowardice, and no small indication of a bad cause.



ment has four grapes growing upon it? Had he read his Bible with due care, he would have known this without the teaching of Seceders. Grapes of gall, and bitter clusters, have been brought forth under the best government. God himself was King over Israel, from the time of their coming out of Egypt, to the days of Saul, and how many four grapes did that people bring forth during that long period? How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert? Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the holy one of Israel. And when they were settled in the land of Canaan, they brought forth four grapes, tho' blessed with the best of external privileges. God fenced his vineyard, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

“Q 84 Do you think the present civil rulers are nursing fathers to the church of Christ?”

A. We do think them nursing fathers, and challenge Mr. Newton, aided by the Reformed Presbytery, to prove, that they are not. If we should be called flatterers of princes, we must say, that so far as we know, the church of Christ hath enjoyed a longer season of external peace and prosperity under the present royal family, than in any former period, from the commencement of Christianity in Great Britain, to this day. And not unto our kings, but unto the King of saints and nations be the glory. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whethersoever he will.” We cannot mention a race of princes in Scotland, or England, nay perhaps in all Europe, who have done less hurt to the Church, than these of the Hanoverian line; nay, they have been nursing fathers unto her, by defending her civil, and sacred privileges. Far worse civil rulers, than these in Great Britain, have been an hedge to the vineyard of Christ. The earth has often helped the woman. Jacob and his posterity were nursed for a time, and dwelt safely in the land of Goshen, under the government of a Pagan prince. “Is not that aversion  
“to the Hanoverian succession an insatiation, while no other way  
“under heaven appears for our preservation and that of the Pro-  
“testant religion? They will tell you, What is an Hanoverian better  
“than a Papist? What is the difference betwixt consubstantiation  
“and transubstantiation? Papists and Jacobites have spread this.  
“But Protestants ought to honour that family, seeing it is but  
“the present Duchessdowager’s father and mother that lost the  
“kingdom of Bohemia for the Protestant religion; with whose  
“loss of that kingdom the Protestant religion was lost there: and  
“and for them many a prayer was long put up by the Church of

"Scotland in our forefathers days. And should we grudge God's giving that family a kingdom, that lost one for his cause." \*

"Q. 85, 86. Do you think it possible for magistrates to reform their administration, while they act agreeable to a wicked constitution? Is it not the best way to reform a corrupt State or Church, to begin at the constitutions, when these are defective?"

A. These questions take it for granted, that the civil British constitution is a wicked one; but we have already proved beyond all reasonable contradiction, that it is not so bad as the querist takes it to be. Evil things are in it, and this will be the case with all civil and religious constitutions, as long as the world stands or at least, till the glory of the latter days come. Good things are in it, and for these let us be thankful to God, the giver of all good. As to the corruptions in the constitution of Church and State, the Reformed Brethren are doing no more for the reformation of them, than Seceders are doing. When Seceders become statesmen, they will be much to blame, if they use not all their power for the rectification of a wicked constitution.

"Q. 87. Is it lawful for a Seceder to pray, that the Lord would overturn all those constitutions in Britain and Ireland, that are contrary to his preceptive will, altho' agreeable to the will of the *primores regni*, the darling of Seceders?"

A. Mr Newton speaks here in the language of scoffers, that shall come in the last days, walking after their own lusts. Prayer is a solemn act of religious worship, and should be spoken of, not with levity, but with reverence and godly fear. Seceders have no respect to the will of the *primores regni*, when they pray for the reformation of Church and State, in Britain and Ireland. The will of the *primores regni* is not the rule, to direct Seceders in prayer. They have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto they do well that they take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.

"Q. 88. Was there no injustice, no tyranny, in excommunicating David Leslie, and others, for giving in to your Synod a paper of grievances?"

"Q. 89. Was there no tyranny, no unfaithfulness in excommunicating Mr Nairn on account of his zeal and faithfulness for the civil part of a Covenanted Reformation?"

"Q. 90. Where was your rule and precedent for casting out of your Church by excommunication, Messrs. Marshall and Culbertson, who never were members of your Church? Had you not as good a right to excommunicate the Pope of Rome?"

"Q. 91. Was the sinful abuse of Church-censure in the three last mentioned cases, no cause why the Lord suffered you to draw the sword of excommunication, and sheath it in one another's bowels?"

Q. 92. Has



"Q. 92. Has your abuse of that ordinance brought no contempt upon it? And is there no cause or ground of controversy the Lord has against you for it?"

"Q. 93. Is not the Lord's controversy pursuing you, by dividing and scattering you in his anger, and giving you up to strong delusions, that you may believe a lie?"

"Q. 94. Is it not a lye to say, that the act of our blessed Lord's taking the bread in the Sacrament, is a dumb sign; and that you are willing it should stand a cypher in your Bible?"

"Q. 95. Is it lawful for the Synod to condemn the Revolution Church for an act of mutual forbearance; and yet make the same act themselves, with respect to the Institution of the Sacrament?"

"Q. 96. Is there no error, no blasphemy in Mr Ramsay's pamphlet? If so, is there no censure to be inflicted upon him?"

"Q. 97. Is there no fear of the Bible falling into disrepute, and that Church falling into Quakerism, who alters, innovates, and cuts off part of the institutions of the Sacraments as excrescences?"

"Q. 98. If all those that are resolved to observe the Lord's institution, and those that are to follow the new mode, as it is called, are still to dwell in communion, I ask, if your Synod will be a house compactly built together, or a house divided? Whether will the name of your house be Bethel, or Bethaven?"

"Q. 99. Are all those well-meaning people, whom you persuade to swear your new Bond, under a false pretence of being the *all* of our solemn Covenants, thereby obliged to cleave to the Synod, and to adopt every erroneous tenet that comes from their noddle?"

"Q. 100. Do you think the Associate Synods, Burgher and Antiburgher, are faithful, honest right constituted courts of Christ, in their violent opposition to, and open contempt of the civil part of a Covenanted Reformation?"

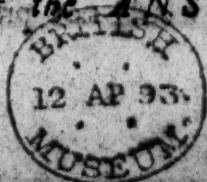
A. The judicious reader will easily see, that these Thirteen Questions have not the smallest respect to the present controversy. A great deal of dust is thrown upon the men, but not a word spoken against their cause. The querist uses the weapon of defamation here, instead of the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; and libelling, instead of reasoning. Seceders are guilty of tyranny, and of abusing church censure.—They are given up to strong delusions, and in danger of falling into Quakerism.—One is a liar, and another a blasphemer.—Their house is not Bethel, a house of God; but Bethaven, a house of vanity.—Erroneous tenets come from their noddle.—The Associate Synods, Burgher and Antiburgher, are not right constituted courts of Christ, they are violent opposers, and open contemners of the civil part of a Covenanted Reformation. A defamatory satire is a true characteristic of a desperate cause. If all the articles of the above libel were well founded, they would not prove, that the principles of  
Seceders

Seceders, about civil government, are false; and here the Reformed Brethren and Seceders are agreed for once. "What connection, I pray you, have the practices of individuals with the soundness and unsoundness of principles? Suppose the practice of every Dissenter were opposite to his principles, does that overthrow the goodness of his cause? The goodness or badness of a principle is totally disconnected from the practice of the professor. — Dissenters have existed many scores of years, professing Christian principles—and they must have been more than human imperfect creatures, had not failings in Christian practices, and in a testimony, appeared amongst them." \* Seceders could pick out faults in the practice of Old Dissenters, but they are not yet driven to such a sorry shift, as to build their principles about civil government upon a dunghill of real, or of supposed infirmities. The cause of the Secession about civil government, is not built on defamatory libels, nor on Acts of Parliament, which may be made to-day, and disannulled to-morrow, but on the word of the Lord, which liveth, and abideth for ever. Mr. Newton pretends to be afraid that Seceders will fall into Quakerism, but let him take heed, least he fall into Deism; for his reasoning against Seceders, is very like the reasoning of Deists, who conclude from the faults of professors, that the Christian religion is a cunningly devised fable. If a reply shall be returned to the preceding pages, it is expected, that it will abound, not with bold and groundless assertions, but with scriptural arguments; not with human, but with heavenly Acts of Parliament; and not with † Billingsgate language, but with words of truth, and soberness. Provoking, and reviling speeches, should never be used as armour in the Christian warfare. If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. May Christians of all denominations earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints: And may they never use any other weapon in this holy war, but the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds.

Letter from Stirling, p. 68, 69.

See a specimen of such language in Mr. Newton's Letter, p. 13. & 61. "Every throne, in a Seceder's squint (I had almost said blind) eye, is a throne of the Lord:—They cannot find the difference between the throne of righteousness, and the throne of iniquity. Tell them of it, they are fit to turn about and rent you; write them of it, they will grin and laugh. If you had lived in the persecuting period, your malignant blood would have run in your veins; there would not one drop of it have fallen to the ground for the cause of Christ.—You love the work of the informers, and cursed intelligencers in that period." Men professing godliness, should not speak half in the speech of Ashdod, and half in the Jews language.

END of the ANSWERS.





## P O S T S C R I P T,

*Containing a few QUERIES, proposed to the serious consideration of the Reformed Presbytery, and their followers.*

IT would be very easy, to ask an hundred questions, but a few, respecting the matter in debate, will be more acceptable to the reader, and more likely to reform the Reformed Brethren, than a thousand questions twice told, which have no concern with the present controversy.

*Quest. 1.* You profess yourselves, to be the genuine successors of our worthy Covenanters; but can you mention any one of these, who, in the persecuting period, refused to obey the king as supreme, in things lawful, till he became an absolute tyrant?

*Q. 2.* Doth God require Christians to profess principles, which they must of absolute necessity contradict, in practice?

*Q. 3.* Is it not evident, even yourselves being judges, that you cannot reduce to practice a single jot of your political principles, except your refusing to pray for government?

*Q. 4.* Were the precepts delivered by Paul, Rom. xiii. 1.—7. of any use to Christians, before Christianity became the established religion in the Roman empire?

*Q. 5.* Do you believe, that Paul, in the passage above quoted, commanded the Christians at Rome to render tribute, custom, fear, honour, to magistracy in the abstract, as the *Letter from Stirling* plainly supposes, p. 58, near the foot?

*Q. 6.* Do you believe, that Christ gave the Jews an allowance to kill Cæsar, as your Testimony very plainly insinuates, p. 150. line tenth, and downwards?

*Q. 7.* Do you think, that the accusers of Christ spake the truth, as your Testimony insinuates, p. 150. “It is violence done to the text to say, that it contains a command to pay tribute to Cæsar;” and it would appear from Luke xxiii. 2. that the Jews themselves “did not understand it so.” The words in Luke xxiii. 2, are, *We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar.* Do you really believe, that Christ forbade to give tribute to Cæsar, as his false accusers said he did?

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Q. 8. Hath not the approved example of saints in Scripture, the force of a Scripture-precept, for directing the practice of Christians? But you have rejected said example, as appears from Mr. Thorburn's *Vindiciæ*, p. 104. "Tho' I should make no other reply, to this part of his proof, than to tell him that it is all brought from example; I would imagine the objection would not want its own weight. *Preceptis non exemplis standum.*" That is, our duty to civil rulers must not be regulated, by the approved examples of saints in Scripture, but by Scripture precepts. If this be sound doctrine, we must no more go forth by the footsteps of the flock of Christ, nor be followers of Paul, even as he also was of Christ. When the Reformed Brethren rejected the example of saints in Scripture, I think, they should have excepted the example of the King of saints, who was a servant of rulers.

Q. 9. Do you believe, that our blessed Lord, in the days of his humiliation, was subject to the powers, which then were, or to Heathen magistrates? Is not this the name whereby he was called, *A servant of rulers*, Isa. xlix. 7. 'A servant of, or subject to rulers,' said the famous Boston. "Pilate boasted of his power over him," said the pious Henry. "This he submitted to for our salvation."

Q. 10. Is magistracy an ordinance of God, as the God of nature, and common to all men; or is it an ordinance of Christ as Mediator, and peculiar only to Christians? If magistracy is as much a gospel ordinance, as the preaching of the word, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, &c. Christians should observe it, however few in number, and wherever they are, tho' it should be at the peril of their lives. "Teaching them, said Christ to his apostles, to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Q. 11. Did not the most part of the kings of Israel, and of Judah, want the good qualifications, which you make absolutely necessary to the office of the magistrate? Did God ever command the people, to disown their authority, because they wanted such and such good qualifications?

Q. 12. Why do you endeavour to support your political principles, so much by Acts of Parliament, and to little by the word of God? "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isa. viii. 20.

F I N I S.





